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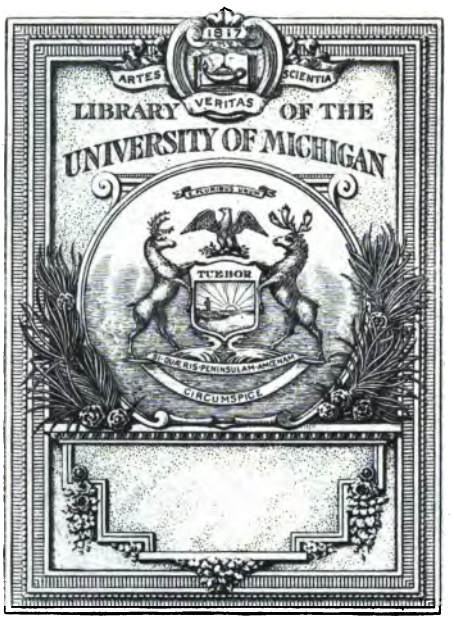
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Northern Antiquities.

VOLUME I.

Description of the Manners, &c. of the Ancient DANES.

Northern Antiquities:

OR,

A DESCRIPTION

OF THE

Manners, Customs, Religion and Laws

OF THE

ANCIENT DANES,

And other Northern Nations;

Including those of

Our own SAXON ANCESTORS.

WITH

A Translation of the EDDA, or

System of RUNIC MYTHOLOGY,

AND

OTHER PIECES,

From the Ancient ISLANDIC Tongue.

In TWO VOLUMES.

TRANSLATED

From Monsr. MALLET's *Introduction a l' Histoire de Dannemarc*, &c.

With Additional NOTES

By the English Translator,

AND

Goranson's Latin Version of the EDDA.

VOLUME I.

LONDON:

Printed for T. CARNAN and Co. at No. 65. in St. Paul's Church-yard. MDCCLXX.

English
Hefner
9-15-39
39232
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An Account of the AUTHOR, extracted from *La France Literaire*, 2 *Tom.* 1769, 12*mo.* [*Tom. I. pag.* 326.]

PAUL HENRY MALLET

is a native of Geneva: He was ſometime Royal Profeſſor of Belles Lettres at Copenhagen, and one of the Preceptors of the Prince of Denmark, now King Chriſtian VII. He is a member of the Academies at Upſal and Lyons; and a correſpondent of the Academy of Inſcriptions and Belles-Lettres in France. His works are,

Hiſtoire de Dannemarck, &c. (i. e. The Hiſtory of Denmark) 1755. 3 *vol.* 4*to.* or 1763. 6 *vol.* 12*mo.*

Forme du Gouvernement de Swede. (i. e. The Form of Government of Sweden.) 1756.

Abregé de l'Hiſtoire de Dannemarck. (i. e. An Abridgment of the Hiſtory of Denmark.) 1760. 8*vo.*

Hiſtoire de Heſſe. (i. e. The Hiſtory of Heſſe.) 1766. 8*vo.*

THE

TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

My Lord,

THE following work is inſcribed to your Grace with the moſt genuine reſpect, and, I flatter myſelf, not without propriety, ſince it may poſſibly afford amuſement to one of the moſt poliſhed Noblemen of the preſent age, to obſerve from what rude and ſimple beginnings our higheſt improvements have been derived; and to trace, to their ſource, thoſe peculiarities of character, manners and government, which ſo remarkably diſtinguiſh the Teutonic nations.

Among the hiſtorical digreſſions which our Author has ſcattered through his work, is a full relation of the firſt ſettlement of the NORMANS in France. This cannot

but be intereſting to your Grace, as the great Family, which you ſo nobly repreſent, derived their origin from one of the Northern Chiefs, who aſſiſted in that conqueſt. From the place of their reſidence in Lower Normandy *, they took the name of PERCY; a name, which was afterwards eminently celebrated in our Engliſh annals, and which you have revived with additional luſtre.

Among the many ſhining and amiable qualities which diſtinguiſh your Grace and the Dutcheſs of Northumberland, none have appeared to me more truly admirable than that high reſpect and reverence, which you both of you ſhow for the heroic Race whoſe poſſeſſions you inherit.

Superior to the mean and ſelfiſh jealouſy of thoſe, who, conſcious of their own want of dignity or worth, conſign to oblivion the illuſtrious dead, and wiſh to blot out all remembrance of them from the earth; you, my Lord, have, with a more than filial piety, been employed for many years in reſtoring and reviving every memorial of the PERCY name.

Deſcended, yourſelf, from a moſt ancient and reſpectable Family; and not afraid to be compared with your noble predeceſſors the Earls of NORTHUMBERLAND, you

* Near VILLEDIEU, in the diſtrict of ST. LO.

have

have repaired their monuments, rebuilt their caſtles, and replaced their trophies: and whatever appears to be any way connected with them, is ſure to attract your attention and regard.

With this generoſity of mind, added to your taſte, munificence, and love of the arts, can we wonder that your name is the delight and ornament of the Engliſh nation? or that it is equally dear to a ſiſter country, where your upright and diſintereſted plan of government, your politeneſs and magnificence eſtabliſhed your dominion over every heart; and where the engaging and exalted virtues of the Dutcheſs have left an impreſſion never to be effaced.

That you may both of you long enjoy thoſe diſtinguiſhed honours and that princely fortune, which you ſo highly adorn: That they may be tranſmitted down, in your own poſterity, to the lateſt ages, is the ſincere and fervent wiſh of

My Lord,

Your Grace's

Moſt humble, and

MDCCLXX. Moſt devoted ſervant,

THE EDITOR.

THE TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE Author of the following Work had a ſhare in the education of that amiable Prince, CHRISTIAN VII. King of Denmark, who lately honoured this nation with a viſit. During his reſidence in the North, our Author Monſ. MALLET (who has all the talents of a fine writer) was engaged by the late King FREDERICK V. to write a Hiſtory of Denmark in the French Language. By way of Introduction to that Hiſtory, he drew up theſe two prefatory Volumes, the merit of which has long been acknowledged in moſt parts of Europe.

Though intended only as a Preliminary Piece, it has all the merit of a complete independent work; and, except to the natives of Denmark, is much more intereſting and entertaining than the Hiſtory itſelf, which it was intended to precede. It very early engaged the attention of the preſent Tranſlator: whoſe reading having run ſomewhat in the ſame track with that of the Author, made him fond of the ſubject, and

tempted him to give in an Engliſh dreſs a work in which it was diſplayed with ſo much advantage. As he happened alſo to have many of the original books from which the French Author had taken his materials, he flattered himſelf they would ſupply ſome Illuſtrations, which might give an additional value to the Verſion.

For this reaſon, as alſo to afford himſelf an agreeable amuſement, the Tranſlator ſome time ago undertook this work; but a ſeries of unexpected avocations intervened, and it was thrown aſide for ſeveral years. At length he was prevailed upon to reſume it; and as many of his friends were ſo obliging as to ſhare among them different parts of the Tranſlation, he had little more to do but to compare their performances with the original, and to ſuperadd ſuch REMARKS as occurred to him. Theſe are generally diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of the Author by the letter T *.

He was the rather invited to undertake this taſk, as he perceived the Author had been drawn in to adopt an opinion that has been a great ſource of miſtake and confuſion to many learned writers of the ancient hiſtory of Europe; viz. that of ſuppoſing the ancient Gauls and Germans, the Britons and Saxons, to have been all originally one and the ſame people; thus confounding the antiquities of the Gothic and Celtic nations. This crude opinion, which perhaps was firſt taken up by CLUVERIUS †, and maintained by him with uncommon erudition, has been ſince incau-

* When the preſent Tranſlation was undertaken, only the firſt edition of the original had appeared; and from that ſeveral of the firſt chapters were tranſlated: In that edition the firſt volume was not, as here, divided into XIII. CHAPTERS, but into V. BOOKS. Afterwards the Author reviſed his work, and publiſhed a new edition, in which he not only made the new diviſion above-mentioned, but many conſiderable alterations both in the Text and Notes. It was neceſſary to accommodate the Verſion to this new Reviſal, but the Tranſlator could not help retaining in the margin many of the rejected Paſſages, which he thought too valuable to be wholly diſcarded.

† Philippi CLUVERI Germaniæ Antiquæ Libri Tres, &c. Lugduni Batav. Apud Elzev. 1616. folio.

tiouſly

tiouſly adopted by KEYSLER ‡ and PELLOUTIER §, the latter of whom has, with great diligence and ſkill, endeavoured to confirm it. In ſhort, ſo much learning and ingenuity have ſcarcely ever been more perverſely and erroneouſly applied, or brought to adorn and ſupport a more groundleſs hypotheſis. This miſtake the Tranſlator thought might be eaſily corrected in the preſent work; and by weeding out this one error, he hoped he ſhould obtain the Author's pardon, and acquire ſome merit with the Engliſh Reader ‖.

And that it is an error he thinks will appear from the attentive conſideration of a few particulars, which can here be only mentioned in brief. For to give the ſubject a thorough diſcuſſion, and to handle it in its full extent, would far exceed the limits of this ſhort Preface.

The ancient and original inhabitants of Europe, according to Cluverius and Pelloutier, conſiſted only of two diſtinct races of men, viz. the CELTS and SARMATIANS; and that from one or other of theſe, but chiefly from the former, all the ancient nations of Europe are deſcended. The Sarmatians or Sauromatæ, were the anceſtors of all the Sclavonian Tribes, viz. the Poles, Ruſſians, Bohemians, Walachians, &c. who continue to this day a diſtinct and ſeparate people, extremely different in their character, manners, laws and language from the other race, which was that of the Celts; from whom (they will have it) were uniformly deſcended the old inhabitants of Gaul, Ger-

‡ Antiquitates Selectæ Septentrionales et Celticæ, &c. Autore Joh. Georgio KEYSLER, &c. Hannoveræ 1720. 8vo.

§ Hiſtoire des Celtes, et particulierement des Gaulois et des Germains, &c. par Mr. Simon PELLOUTIER. Haye 1750. 2 Tom. 12mo. This learned Writer, who is a proteſtant miniſter, counſellor of the Conſiſtory, and librarian to the academy at Berlin, is deſcended from a family originally of Languedoc, and was born at Leipſic, 27 October, 1694. O. S. (*v. France literaire, Tom. I.*)

‖ Though the words GOTHIC or TEUTONIC are often ſubſtituted in the Tranſlation, inſtead of the Author's favourite word CELTIQUE; yet care has been taken to repreſent the Author's own expreſſion in the margin. Sometimes where it was not needful to be very preciſe, the word GOTHIC has only been added to the Author's word CELTIC; but the inſertion is carefully diſtinguiſhed by inverted commas.

many, Scandinavia, Britain and Spain, who were all included by the ancients under the general name of Hyperboreans, Scythians, and Celts, being all originally of one race and nation, and having all the ſame common language, religion, laws, cuſtoms and manners.

This is the poſition which theſe Writers have adopted and maintained, with an uncommon diſplay of deep erudition, and a great variety of ſpecious arguments. But that their poſition, ſo far as relates to the Celts, is erroneous, and the arguments that ſupport it inconcluſive, will appear, if it can be ſhown, That ancient Germany, Scandinavia, Gaul and Britain were not inhabited by the deſcendants of one ſingle race; but on the contrary, divided between two very different people; the one of whom we ſhall call, with moſt of the Roman authors, CELTIC, who were the anceſtors of the Gauls, Britons and Iriſh; the other GOTHIC or TEUTONIC, from whom the Germans, Belgians, Saxons and Scandinavians derived their origin; and that theſe were *ab origine* two diſtinct people, very unlike in their manners, cuſtoms, religion and laws.

As to the Arguments by which Cluverius and Pelloutier ſupport their hypotheſis that the Gothic and Celtic nations were the ſame, they may all be reduced to Two Heads; viz. either to QUOTATIONS from the ancient Greek and Roman writers; or to ETYMOLOGIES of the names of perſons or places, &c.

With regard to the latter, (viz. ETYMOLOGIES) theſe two writers lay it down that the preſent German or High Dutch is a genuine daughter of the ancient Celtic or Gauliſh language *; becauſe, from it they can explain the Etymology of innumerable names that were well known to be Gauliſh or Celtic †; and this being admitted, it muſt follow that the Germans

* *La langue Alemande eſt un reſte de l'ancienne langue des Celtes.* Pelloutier, vol. I. p. 165, &c.

† Vid. Cluv. lib. I. cap. vi, vii, viii, &c. Pellout. liv. I. chap. xv.

are

are a branch of the Celts, and consequently, that the Celtic and Teutonic nations were the same. In proſecuting this argument it muſt be acknowledged, that they have produced many inſtances that appear at firſt ſight very plauſible. But whoever conſiders how little we can depend upon the Etymology of obſolete words, derived from barbarous dead languages, in which there are no books extant, will not build very ſecurely on proofs of this ſort. No one will aſſert that the preſent German bears any reſemblance now to the modern Welſh and Iriſh languages; and yet there are writers in abundance who will undertake to account for the name of almoſt every place, perſon or office in ancient Europe, from one or other of theſe two living tongues, and will produce inſtances full as plauſible and concluſive, as any adduced by Cluverius or his followers *. After all, there is probably a good deal of truth on both ſides; I can readily believe that all the names of places and perſons in ancient Germany, or ſuch other countries as any of the Gothic or Teutonic nations at any time penetrated into, will be reducible to the language now ſpoken by their deſcendants: And that in like manner, from the Iriſh and Welſh languages, which may be allowed to be genuine daughters of the ancient Gallic or Celtic tongue †, it will be eaſy to explain ſuch names as were impoſed by any of the ancient Celtic or Gallic tribes. Indeed in the very remote ages, prior to hiſtory, one cannot pretend to ſay what were the diſtinct bounds or limits of each people. They were like all other barbarous nations, roving and unſettled; and often varied their ſituation; being

* See that excellent antiquary Lluyd, in Archæologia Britannica, &c. not to mention many late writers of a different Stamp, viz. Jones, Parsons, &c. &c.

† That the preſent Welſh language is the genuine daughter of the ancient Britiſh ſpoken in the time of the Romans, cannot be diſputed; becauſe we have now extant MSS. writ in every age from the Roman times down to the preſent, which plainly prove the deſcent, and are not unintelligible to the preſent inhabitants of Wales. (See Evans's ſpecimens of Welſh poetry, &c.) Now that the ancient Britiſh differed little from the Gauliſh, we are aſſured by Tacitus. *Sermo haud multum diverſus.* Tacit. Agric. c. 11.

ſometimes

ſometimes ſpread over a country; at other times driven out by ſome ſtronger tribe of barbarians, or forſaking it themſelves in ſearch of new ſettlements. Cæſar informs us, that ſome of the Gallic tribes forced their way into Germany, and there eſtabliſhed themſelves *. It is equally probable, that before his time, bands of Germans might at different periods penetrate into Gaul †; where, although their numbers might be too ſmall to preſerve them a diſtinct nation, yet theſe emigrants might import many names of perſons and places that would outlive the remembrance of their founders. This will ſufficiently account for the diſperſion of words derived from both languages, and inform us why Celtic derivations may be found in Germany and German names diſcovered in Gaul. So much for arguments derived from Etymology; which are ſo very uncertain and precarious, that they can only amount to preſumptions at beſt, and can never be oppoſed to ſolid poſitive proofs.

With regard to the other ſource of Arguments, by which theſe learned writers ſupport their opinion of the identity of the Gauls and Germans, viz. QUOTATIONS from the ancient Greek and Roman authors; theſe they have produced in great abundance. But even if it ſhould be granted that the Greeks and Romans applied ſometimes the names of Celtic, Scythian or Hyperborean indiſcriminately to the ancient inhabitants of Germany and Gaul, of Britain and Scandinavia, the inference will ſtill be doubted by thoſe that conſider how little known all theſe nations were to the early writers of Greece and Rome; who, giving them all the general name of Barbarians, inquired little farther about them, and took very little pains to be

* *Fuit antea tempus cum Germanos Galli virtute ſuperarent et ultrò bella inferrent, ac . . . . trans Rhenum colonias mitterent, &c.* Vid. plura apud Cæſ. de Bell. Gall. lib. vi.

† This Cæſar expreſly tells us of the Belgæ, who were ſettled to the north of the Seine and the Marne. *Pleroſque Belgas eſſe ortos à Germania; Rhenumque antiquitus tranſductos, propter loci fertilitatem ibi conſediſſe; Galloſque qui ea loca incollerent, expaliſſe.* De Bell. Gall. lib. ii.

accurately

accurately informed about their peculiar differences and distinctions. Even a long time after these rude nations had begun to press upon the empire, and had made the Romans dread their valour, still their writers continued to have so confused and indistinct a knowledge of their different descent and character, as to confound both the Celts and Goths with the Sarmatians, whom all writers allow to have been a distinct nation from them both *: Thus Zosimus, an historian of the third century, includes them all under the common name of Scythians †; and this, at a time when, after their long and frequent intercourse with the Romans, their historians ought to have been taught to distinguish them better.

However, the Greek and Roman authors were not all equally indistinct and confused on this subject. It will be shewn below, that some of their best and most discerning writers, when they had an opportunity of being well informed, knew how to distinguish them accurately enough: So that both Cluverius and Pelloutier have found themselves much puzzled how to reconcile such stubborn passages with their own favourite hypotheses, and have been entangled in great difficulties in endeavouring to get over the objections these occasion. Even with regard to the more early historians, they appear to have been sometimes more precise and accurate in their descriptions. There is a remarkable passage of this kind in Strabo ‡; in which he informs us that, although the old Greek authors gave all the northern nations the common name of Scythians or Celtoscythians, yet that writers STILL MORE ANCIENT §, divided all "the nations who lived beyond the Euxine, the Danube and the Adriatic Sea, "into the HYPERBOREANS, the SAUROMATÆ, and

* See Pelloutier, vol. I. liv. 1. ch. ii. passim.

† See Pelloutier, vol. I. p. 17.

‡ Strabo, lib. xi. Απαντας μεν δη τους Προσβορρους κοινως οι παλαιοι των Ελληνων συγγραφεις, Σκυθας και Κελτοσκυθας εκαλουν, &c. Vid. Cluv. lib. i. p. 22. Pellout. vol. I. p. 2.

§ Οι δε ΕΤΙ ΠΡΟΤΕΡΟΝ διελοντες, &c.

"ARI-

" ARIMASPIANS; as they did thoſe beyond the Caſ-
" pian Sea into the SACÆ and MESSAGETÆ." Theſe SACÆ and MESSAGETÆ might poſſibly be the anceſtors of the Saxons and Goths, (as theſe laſt are fully proved to have been the Getæ of the ancients *) who, in the time of thoſe very remote Greek writers, poſſibly had not penetrated ſo far weſtward as they did afterwards: As it is well known that the GERMANII are mentioned by Herodotus † as a Perſian people. Now the moſt authentic hiſtorians and poets of the Gothic or Teutonic nations all agree that their anceſtors came at different emigrations from the more eaſtern countries ‡. But with regard to the three other nations, the HYPERBOREANS, the SAUROMATÆ and the ARIMASPIANS; if we agree with Pelloutier §, that under the two former the Celts and Sarmatians are plainly deſigned; when he contends ‖ that the Arimaſpians are a meer fabulous people, which never exiſted, who does not ſee that he is blinded by hypotheſis? Why may not the ancient Finns or Laplanders have been intended by this term, which he himſelf interprets from Herodotus to ſignify ONE-EYED, and ſuppoſes it deſcriptive of ſome nation that excelled in archery, as alluding to their practice of winking with

* See Pelloutier, liv. 1. ch. viii. vol. I. p. 46, 47, &c notes.

† Herod. in Clio. Αλλοι δε Περσαι εισι οιδε, Παρθυαιοι, Χορασμιοι, ΓΕΡΜΑΝΟΙ τε. Edit. R. Steph. 1570. pag. 34.

‡ All the old northern Scalds and hiſtorians agree that their anceſtors came thither from the Eaſt, but then ſome of them, to do the greater honour to their country, and to its antiquities, pretend that they firſt made an emigration into the Eaſt from Scandinavia. See Sheringham *De Anglorum Gentis origine*. *Cantabrigiæ* 1670. 8vo. paſſim. It is the great fault of SHERINGHAM not to know how to diſtinguiſh what is true and credible from what is improbable and fabulous in the old Northern Chronicles: Becauſe ſome parts are true, he receives all for authentic; as a late ingenious writer, becauſe ſome parts are fabulous, is for rejecting all as falſe. (See CLARKE, in his learned Treatiſe on the Connexion between the Roman, Saxon and Engliſh Coins, &c. Lond. 1767. 4to.) By the ſame rule we might reject the whole Grecian hiſtory: For that of the North has, like it, its FABULOUS, its DOUBTFUL, and more CERTAIN PERIODS; which acute and judicious criticks will eaſily diſtinguiſh.

§ Liv. 1. chap. i. ‖ Vol. I. p. 9, 10.

one

one eye in order to take aim *. Tacitus expreſly aſſures us that the FENNI were great archers †; and, as is obſerved in the following book ‡, it is highly probable that at ſome early period of time, both the Finns and Laplanders were poſſeſſed of much larger and better tracts of country than the northern deſerts to which they are now confined.

But whether this interpretation be admitted or nōt, and whatever the more early Greek and Roman writers knew concerning the Celtic and Gothic nations, it is very certain that in latter times, ſuch of them as had moſt diſcernment, and the beſt opportunities of being informed, have plainly and clearly delivered that the Germans and Gauls were two diſtinct people, of different origin, manners, laws, religion and language, and have accurately pointed out the difference between them.

Before we deſcend to particulars, it may be premiſed, that theſe two races of men were in many things alike, as would neceſſarily happen to two ſavage nations who lived nearly in the ſame climate, who were expoſed to the ſame wants, and were obliged to relieve them by the ſame means. The more men approach to a ſtate of wild and uncivilized life, the greater reſemblance they will have in manners, becauſe ſavage nature, reduced almoſt to meer brutal inſtinct, is ſimple and uniform; whereas art and refinement are infinitely various: Thus one of the rude natives of Nova Zembla will bear a ſtrong reſemblance in his manner of life to a ſavage of New Holland: They will both live upon fiſh and ſea fowls, becauſe their deſart ſhores afford no other food; they will both be clad in the ſkins of ſeals and other ſea animals, becauſe their country affords no other cloathing; and they

* Pelloutier, ibid. Αριμασπους μονοφθαλμους . . . ΑΡΙΜΑ γαρ Εν καλουσι Σκυθαι, ΣΠΟΥ δε τον Οφθαλμον. Herod. p. 129. 145.

† *Sola in fagittis Spes.* Tac. de Mor. Germ. cap. ult.

‡ Pag. 38, 39.

will both live by fiſhing in little boats, and be armed with lances pointed, for want of metal, either with ſharp flints or the bones of fiſhes: But will it therefore be inferred that the inhabitants of theſe two oppoſite poles of the globe were originally one and the ſame people? The ancient Britons in the time of Cæſar painted their bodies, as do the preſent Cherokees of North America, becauſe it would naturally enough occur to the wild people of every country, that by this practice they might render themſelves terrible to their enemies: Nor will this prove that the Cherokees are deſcended from the ancient Britons. When therefore Cluverius and Pelloutier ſolemnly inform us That the Germans and Gauls lived both of them in ſmall huts or caverns; That they ſubſiſted either on veniſon ſlain in hunting, or on the milk and cheeſe procured from their flocks: That both people led a wandering roving life, and equally diſliked to live in cities, or follow agriculture, and of courſe ate little or no bread: That they both of them drank out of the horns of animals *, and either went naked, or threw a rude ſkin over their ſhoulders: When they collect a long ſeries of ſuch reſemblances as theſe, and bring innumerable quotations from ancient authors to prove that all theſe deſcriptions are equally given of both people, who does not ſee that all theſe traits are found in every ſavage nation upon earth, and that by the ſame rule they might prove all the people that ever exiſted, to be of one race and nation?

But notwithſtanding theſe general reſemblances, we have ſufficient teſtimony from ſome of the moſt diſcerning ancient authors, that the Germans and Gauls, or in other words, the Celtic and Teutonic nations were ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed from each other, and differed conſiderably in PERSON, MANNERS, LAWS, RELIGION and LANGUAGE.

* Some of the ancient German tribes drank BEER and ALE, as did the old inhabitants of Gaul. (See Pelloutier, vol. I. lib. 2. ch. ii. p. 216, 217, &c.) This, however, proves them not to be the ſame people, any more than our drinking tea and coffee, proves us to be deſcended from the Chineſe and Arabians.

CÆSAR,

CÆSAR, whoſe judgment and penetration will be diſputed by none but a perſon blinded by hypotheſis *, and whoſe long reſidence in Gaul, gave him better means of being informed than almoſt any of his countrymen; Cæſar expreſly aſſures us that the Celts or common inhabitants of Gaul "differed in Language, "Cuſtoms and Laws" from the Belgæ, on the one hand, who were chiefly a Teutonic people †, and from the inhabitants of Aquitain on the other; who, from their vicinity to Spain, were probably of Iberian race. Cæſar poſitively affirms that the nations of Gaul differed from thoſe of Germany in their Manners, and in many other particulars, which he has enumerated at length ‡: And this aſſertion is not thrown out at random, like the paſſages brought by Cluverius againſt it; but is coolly and cautiouſly made, when he

* Cæſar is ſo much more preciſe and poſitive againſt the hypotheſis eſpouſed by Cluverius, Keyſler, Pelloutier, &c. than the common Roman authors, who were generally inattentive to the differences of the barbarous nations; that all the writers above-mentioned ſet out with accuſing Cæſar of being for ever miſtaken; whereas he and Tacitus were probably the only Romans that were generally exact.

† *Gallia eſt omnis diviſa in partes tres: quarum unam incolunt Belgæ, aliam Aquitani, tertiam qui ipſorum lingua Celtæ, noſtra Galli apellantur. Hi omnes* LINGUA, INSTITUTIS, LEGIBUS *inter ſe differunt.* Cæſar de Bello Gall. lib. 1.

Pleroſque Belgas eſſe ortos a Germanis, &c. Ib. lib. 2. (ſee above, page vi, Note †.)

This teſtimony is preciſe and formal; but Cluverius and Pelloutier have found a ſimilar paſſage in Strabo, in which he ſays of the *Aquitani*, that their language only differed A LITTLE from that of the other Gauls, Ενιους ΜΙΚΡΟΝ παραλλαττοντας ταις γλωτταις. (Strab. initio lib. 4.) This I apprehend does not affect the difference between the Gauls and the Belgæ: i. e. the Celts and Goths, which is only the object of my preſent inquiry. (Vid. Cluv. p. 50. 52. Pellout. vol. I. p. 180.) After all, I much doubt whether the original inhabitants of Spain were of Celtic race: There is found no reſemblance between the old Cantabrian language ſtill ſpoken in Biſcay, and any of the Celtic dialects, viz. the Welſh, Armoric, Iriſh, &c. (See the Specimens ſubjoined to this Preface.) I am therefore inclined to follow the ancient authorities collected by Pelloutier, (in vol. I. p. 27. note.) which affirm that the Iberians were a different people from the Celts, and that from an intermixture of the two nations were produced the Celtiberians. Pelloutier ſeems to me to have produced no convincing proofs to the contrary, though he has laboured the point much. As for the *Aquitani*, their intercourſe with the other Gauls may have brought their language to a much nearer reſemblance when Strabo wrote, than it had when Cæſar reſided in Gaul.

‡ De Bello Gallico, lib. 6. Vide locum.

is going to draw the characters of both nations at length in an exact and well finiſhed portrait, which ſhows him to have ſtudied the genius and manners of both people with great attention, and to have been compleatly maſter of his ſubject *.

It is true, the Gauls and Germans reſembled each other in Complexion, and perhaps in ſome other reſpects, as might be expected from their living under the ſame climate, and nearly in the ſame manner; yet that they differed ſufficiently in their PERSONS, appears from Tacitus, who ſays that the inhabitants of Calidonia reſembled the Germans in Features, whereas the Silures were rather like the Spaniards, as the inhabitants of South-Britain bore a great reſemblance to the Gauls †: This plainly proves that the Spaniards, Germans and Gauls were univerſally known to differ in their Perſons.

They differed alſo in MANNERS and CUSTOMS. To inſtance only in one point, among the Germans, the wife did not give a dowry to her huſband, but the huſband to the wife, as Tacitus expreſly aſſures us ‡: Whereas we learn from Cæſar, that among the Gauls, the huſband received a portion in money with his wife, for which he made her a ſuitable ſettlement of his goods, &c. §.

They differed no leſs in their INSTITUTIONS and LAWS. The Celtic nations do not appear to have had that equal plan of liberty, which was the peculiar

* See the paſſage in Cæſar, lib. 6. at large, it was too long to be inſerted here.

† *Habitus corporum varij: . . . Rutilæ Calidoniam habitantium comæ, magni artus Germanicam originem aſſeverant. Silurum colorati vultus, et torti plerumque crines & poſitu contra Hiſpaniam, Iberos veteres trajeciſſe eaſque ſedes occupaſſe fidem faciunt. Proximi Gallis et ſimiles ſunt,* &c. Tacit. in Vit. Agricolæ, c. 11.

‡ *Dotem non Uxor Marito, ſed Uxori Maritus offert.* De Mor. Germ. c. 18.

§ *Viri quantas pecunias ab Uxoribus* DOTIS *nomine acceperunt, tantas ex ſuis bonis, æſtimatione facta, cum dotibus communicant.* De Bello Gall. lib. 6.

honour

honour of all the Gothic tribes, and which they carried with them, and planted wherever they formed ſettlements: On the contrary, in Gaul, all the freedom and power chiefly centered among the Druids and the chief men, whom Cæſar calls *Equites*, or Knights: But the inferior people were little better than in a ſtate of ſlavery *; Whereas every the meaneſt German was independent and free †.

But if none of theſe proofs of difference of Perſon, Manners, Inſtitutions or Laws could have been produced, or ſhould be explained away, ſtill the difference was ſo great and eſſential between the Celtic and Teutonic nations, in regard to RELIGION and LANGUAGE, as can never be got over, and plainly evince them to have been two diſtinct and different people. Theſe two points are ſo ſtrong and concluſive, that the whole proof might be left to reſt upon them.

In comparing the Religious Eſtabliſhment and Inſtitutions of the Celtic tribes, with thoſe of the Gothic or Teutonic nations, the moſt obſervable difference, and what ſtrikes us at firſt ſight, is that peculiar Hierarchy or ſacred College among the Celts, which had the entire conduct of all their religious and even civil affairs, and ſerved them both for magiſtrates and prieſts, viz. that of the DRUIDS; which has nothing to reſemble it among any of the Gothic or Teutonic nations ‡. This difference appeared to Cæſar ſo ſtrik-

* *In omni Gallia eorum hominum, qui aliquo ſunt numero atque honore genera ſunt duo: nam Plebs pænè Servorum habetur loco. . . . De his duobus generibus alterum eſt Druidum, alterum Equitum*, &c. De Bel. Gal. lib. 6.

† Tacitus de Mor. Germ. paſſim.

‡ Our Author, Monſ. MALLET, thinks that the twelve Pontiffs, called *Drottar*, who were aſſiſtants to Odin in adminiſtring juſtice, (p. 61.) were a kind of Druids; and that their name *Drottes*, has ſome affinity to the Celtic word DRUID (p. 140.) this however is meer fancy; there appears no more connection between the functions or offices of theſe two orders of men, than there is between their names: That of DRUID being generally derived from the Greek Δρυς, or rather from the Celtic *Derw* or *Deru*, an OAK, their ſacred Tree: (Vid. Borlace, p. 67.) whereas the words *Drottar* and *Drottes* come from the Iceland. Drotten, *Dominus*. Swed. Drott, *Heros*.

ing, that he ſets out with this, at his entrance on his deſcription of the Germans, as a fundamental and primary diſtinction §. I do not here enter into a minute deſcription of the nature of the Druids' eſtabliſhment, or an enumeration of their privileges, becauſe theſe may be found in Cæſar and Pliny among the ancients, and in ſo many authors among the moderns ‖ : It will be ſufficient to ſay that, although the Teutonic nations had Prieſts, they bore no more reſemblance to the Druids

§ GERMANI *multum ab hâc conſuetudine* [*ſc.* GALLORUM] *differunt: nam neque* DRUIDES *habent, qui rebus Divinis præſint neque ſacrificiis ſtudent*, &c. De Bell. Gal. lib. 6.

‖ Vid. CÆSAR. De Bello Gall. Comment. lib. 6. PLINII Nat. Hiſt. lib. 16. c. 44.

Of the moderns, ſee TOLAND's Specimen of a Hiſt. of the Druids, in Miſcel. Works, vol. Iſt, 1747. 8vo. STUKELY's Stonehenge, and Abury. 2 vols. 1740, &c. folio. But eſpecially Dr. BORLACE's Antiquities of Cornwall, 2d edit. 1769. folio. This learned and ingenious writer has left nothing to be defired on the ſubject of the DRUIDS, and their inſtitutions: He has however been drawn in by KEYSLER and the other German antiquaries, to adopt their hypotheſis, that the Religion of the ancient Germans was, in fundamentals, the ſame with that of the Gauls and Britains, (vid. p. 71.) As nothing that falls from ſo excellent a writer ought to be diſregarded, I ſhall conſider his arguments with attention. He proves the identity of the German and Gauliſh Religion from the conformity of the Germans and Gauls in the following points: viz. "(1.) The principal Deity of both nations was Mercury; (2.) They ſacrificed human victims: (3.) They had open temples, and (4.) no idols of human ſhape. (5.) They had conſecrated groves; (6.) Worſhipped oaks: (7.) Were fond of auſpicial rites; and (8.) Computed by nights and not by days."

I ſhall conſider each of theſe proofs in their order: And as for the FIRST, that "both nations worſhipped MERCURY:" This amounts to no more than this, that the Gauls and Britons worſhipped for their chief Deity, ſome Celtic God, which Cæſar finding to reſemble in ſome of his attributes the Roman MERCURY, ſcrupled not to call by that Roman name: So again the Germans worſhipped for their ſupreme God, a Divinity of their own, whom Tacitus likewiſe called MERCURY, from a fancied reſemblance to that Roman Deity, perhaps in other of his attributes. We know very well that the Supreme Deity of all the Teutonic nations was ODIN or WODEN, called by the ancient Germans VOTAM and GOTAM, or GODAM, (vid. not. in Tac. Varior. p. 692.) who ſeems chiefly to have reſembled the Roman Mercury, in having a particular power over the ghoſts of the departed: (Vide Bartholin. lib. 2. c. 7. *Odinus Manium fuit Dominus: Mercurio comparandus.*) In other reſpects, how much they differed will appear at firſt ſight in the EDDA. Now if the Celtic Mercury reſembled the Roman no more than Odin did; we ſee how unlike they might be to each other. We are not

even

Druids, than the Pontiffs of the Greeks and Romans, or of any other Pagan people.

Not

even ſure that theſe two MERCURIES of the Gauls and Germans agreed with the MERCURY of the Romans in the ſame points of reſemblance.

But (2.) "Both nations ſacrificed human victims: (3.) Had open "temples; (5.) Conſecrated Groves; and (7.) were fond of auſpicial "rites." Theſe deſcriptions I believe may be applied to all the Pagan nations in the world, during their early barbarous ſtate. For (2.) all Pagan nations have offered human victims: Have had (3.) open temples, before they got covered ones: And, previous to their erecting magnificent domes for their religious rites, have either ſet up circles of rude ſtones, or retired under the natural ſhelter of (5.) ſolemn groves, which, upon that account, they conſecrated: And (7.) all Pagan people have dealt in omens, auſpices, and all the other idle ſuperſtitions of that ſort. There is not one of the above circumſtances but what is mentioned in Scripture, as practiſed by the idolatrous nations which ſurrounded the Jewiſh people, and was equally obſerved by ſome or other of the inhabitants of Italy and Greece: So that the Germans reſembled the Gauls with regard to theſe particulars no more than they did the old idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan, Aſſyria, Greece and Italy. As for the Teutonic nations, they very ſoon got covered temples, (ſee below, p. 127.) and alſo idols of human ſhape, (p. 129.) as had indeed the Celtic nations alſo in the time of Cæſar; for ſo Dr. Borlace himſelf (p. 107.) interprets that paſſage of his concerning the Gauls, (lib. 6.) *Deum maximè Mercurium colunt; Hujus ſunt* PLURIMA SIMULACRA. If theſe SIMULACRA had not been images, but only rude unformed ſtones, Cæſar would doubtleſs have expreſſed himſelf with more reſerve. When, therefore, Dr. Borlace ſays that the Gauls and Germans reſembled each other in having, (4.) "No idols of human ſhape," he muſt only mean in their more early ſtate of idolatry; which I ſuppoſe may alſo be predicated of every ſavage nation, before they have attained any ſkill in ſculpture.

But he ſays, (6.) that both nations "worſhipped Oaks." His proof, however, that the Germans had this ſuperſtition only, is, that "the "SCLAVONIANS (a people of Germany) worſhipped Oaks, incloſed "them with a court, and fenced them in, to keep off all unhallowed ac-"ceſs;" and for this he refers to the note in Tacit. Variorum ad c. 9. where Helmoldus has ſaid, that the RUSSIANS held their groves and fountains ſacred, and that the SCLAVI worſhipped OAKS. This proves nothing with regard to the Teutonic nations; but plainly ſhows that many of the Druidic ſuperſtitions had been caught up and adopted by nations no ways allied to the Celts; and therefore ſuggeſts an eaſy anſwer to the laſt proof that is urged of the reſemblance of the Germans and Gauls in their religious rites and opinions; viz. that,

(8.) Both people "computed by nights, and not by days." This is in reality the only ſolid argument that has been produced. But to this, the anſwer is very obvious. The Teutonic nations, it is allowed, had this very peculiar arbitrary cuſtom, which they probably borrowed from their Celtic neighbours, although of a very different race, and profeſſing, in the main, a very different religion: For if the Sclavonian tribes, whoſe ſituation lay ſo much more remote from the Celts, had adopted their ſuperſtitious veneration for the Oak, which ſeems in no degree to have

 infected

Not only in the peculiar nature of their prieſthood, but in their internal doctrines as well as outward rites, they differed.

The Druids taught, and the Celtic nations believed the Metempſichoſis, or a Tranſmigration of the ſoul out of one body into another: This is ſo poſitively aſſerted of them by Cæſar *, who had been long converſant among them, and knew them well, that it is not in the power of any of the modern ſyſtem-makers to argue and explain his words away, as they have attempted to do in every other point relating to the Celtic antiquities: However, they attempt to qualify it, by aſſerting that the Celtic nations believed only that the ſoul paſſed out of one human body into another, and never into that of brutes †: Which diſtinction I ſhall not now ſtay to examine, but proceed to obſerve, that all the Gothic and Teutonic nations held, on the contrary, a fixed Elizium, and a Hell, where the valiant and the juſt were rewarded; and where the cowardly and the wicked ſuffered puniſhment. The deſcription of theſe forms a great part of the EDDA ‡.

In innumerable other inſtances, the inſtitutions of the Druids among the Celts, were extremely different

infected the Germans; it would have been wonderful indeed, if the latter, who lay contiguous to the Celts, had picked up none of their opinions or practices.

* *In primis hoc volunt perſuadere, Non interire animas, ſed ab aliis poſt mortem tranſire ad alios.* Lib. vi.—Vid. Diodor. Sicul. lib. v. c. 2. & Val. Max. lib. ii. c. 6. Ammian. Marcel. lib. xv.

† Vid. KEYSLER Antiq. Sept. p. 117 BORLACE, p. 98, 99, &c.

‡ It muſt not be concealed, that Bartholine has produced a paſſage from an ancient Ode in the EDDA of SÆMUND FRODE, which plainly ſhews that the doctrine of the Tranſmigration was not wholly unknown to the Scandinavians; but Bartholine himſelf ſpeaks of it as a ſingle inſtance, and it appears from the paſſage itſelf, that this opinion was conſidered by the Scandinavians, as an idle old wives fable. Vid. Bartholin. Cauſæ Contemp. a Danis Mortis. pag. 208. *Sigruna* (Helgonis Uxor) *dolore et mœſtitia extincta eſt. Credebatur antiquitus homines iterum naſci, illud vero* NUNC PRO ANILI ERRORE *habetur. Helgo et Sigruna iterum nati fuiſſe dicuntur; tunc ille Helgo Haddinga-Skadi dicebatur; illa vero Kara, Halfdani filia.* It is probable that in this one inſtance they only copied the doctrine of the Druids. As the Celtic nations preceded the Teutonic tribes in many of their ſettlements, it was probably by the former that this *anilis error antiquitus credebatur*, which was ſoon exploded among their Teutonic ſucceſſors, whoſe eſtabliſhed belief was very different.

from

from thoſe of the Gothic nations. To mention a few: The former frequently burnt a great quantity of human victims alive, in large wicker images, as an offering to their Gods §. The Gothic nations, though like all other Pagans, they occaſionally defiled their altars with human blood, appear never to have had any cuſtom like this.

The Druids venerated the Oak and the Miſſeltoe, which latter was regarded by them as the moſt divine and ſalutary of plants ‖, and gathered with very particular ceremonies. In the Gothic mythology, if any tree ſeems to have been regarded with more particular attention than others, it is the Ash ¶: And as for the Miſſeltoe, it is repreſented in the Edda rather as a contemptible and miſchievous ſhrub *.

But what particularly diſtinguiſhes the Celtic inſtitutions from thoſe of the Gothic or Teutonic nations, is that remarkable air of Secrecy and Myſtery with which the Druids concealed their doctrines from the laity; forbidding that they ſhould ever be committed to writing, and upon that account, not having ſo much as an alphabet of their own †. In this, the inſtitutions of Odin and the Gothic Scalds was the very reverſe. No barbarous people were ſo addicted to writing, as appears from the innumerable quantity of Runic inſcriptions ſcattered all over the north; no barbarous people ever held Letters in higher reverence, aſcribing the invention of them to their chief deity ‡, and attributing to the letters themſelves ſupernatural virtues ⸸. Nor is there the leaſt room to believe that any of their doctrines were locked up or concealed from any part of the community. On the contrary, their Mythology is for ever diſplayed in all the Songs of

§ Vid. Cæſar de Bell. Gall. lib. vi. Borlace, p. 127.
‖ See vol. II. p. 144. &c. ¶ See the Edda *paſſim.*
* See vol. II. p. 139, 140, 143, 145, &c.
† *Neque fas eſſe exiſtimant ea litteris mandare; cum in reliquis fere rebus, publicis privatiſque rationibus,* GRÆCIS LITERIS *utantur. . . . Neque in vulgus Diſciplinam efferri velint.* Cæſar. lib. vi.
‡ Vid. infra, p. 70. 371, 372. &c.
⸸ Vid. infra, p. 374, 375. &c.

their

their SCALDS, juſt as that of the Greeks and Romans is in the Odes of Pindar and Horace. There never exiſted any inſtitution in which there appears leſs of reſerve and myſtery than in that of the Gothic and Scandinavian people.

After all, it may poſſibly be true that the Gothic nations borrowed ſome opinions and practices from the Celts, without being at all deſcended from them, or having any pretenſions to be conſidered as the ſame people. The Celtic tribes were probably the firſt that travelled weſtward, and it is not impoſſible but that ſeveral of the Druidic obſervances might be caught up and imitated by the other nations that came after them ‖. Some reliques of the Druidic ſuperſtitions, we have ſeen (p. xv. Note. 6.) prevailed among the Sclavonians: And ſtill more might be expected to be found among thoſe of Gothic or Teutonic race, both from their nearer vicinage and greater intercourſe with the Celtic nations; from whom the Sarmatians lay more remote. Nothing is more contagious than ſuperſtition; and therefore we muſt not wonder, if in ages of ignorance, one wild people catch up from another, though of very different race, the moſt arbitrary and groundleſs opinions, or endeavour to imitate them in ſuch rites and practices as they are told will recommend them to the Gods, or avert their anger.

Before I quit this ſubject of the Religion of the Celtic and Gothic nations, I muſt beg leave to obſerve, that the Mythology of the latter was probably, in the time of Cæſar and Tacitus, a very crude and naked thing, compared to what it was afterwards, when the northern Scalds had had time to flouriſh and adorn it. From a very few rude and ſimple tenets, theſe wild fablers had, in the courſe of eight or nine centuries, invented and raiſed an amazing ſuperſtructure of

‖ See what has been ſaid above, p. xv. Not. (8.) I know not whether we are to attribute to imitation the practice that prevailed among both people of burying their dead under BARROWS or TUMULI, (ſee p. 221.) This mode of Sepulture, however, makes a great figure in all the old Northern SAGAS or Hiſtories, as well as in the Songs of the SCALDS.

fiction.

fiction. We muſt not therefore ſuppoſe that all the fables of the EDDA were equally known to the Gothic nations of every age and tribe. As truth is uniform and ſimple, ſo error is moſt irregular and various; and it is very poſſible, that different fables and different obſervances might prevail among the ſame people in different times and countries. From their imperfect knowledge of the divine attributes, all Pagan nations are extremely apt to intermix ſomething LOCAL with their idea of the Divinity, to ſuppoſe peculiar Deities preſiding over certain diſtricts, and to worſhip this or that God with particular rites, which were only to be obſerved in one certain ſpot. Hence, to inattentive foreigners, there might appear a difference of religion among nations who all maintained, at the bottom, one common creed; and this will account for whatever diſagreement is remarked between Cæſar and Tacitus in their deſcriptions of the Gods of the ancient Germans: It will alſo account for whatever difference may appear between the imperfect relations of the Roman writers, and the full diſplay of the Gothic mythology held forth in the EDDA. It is indeed very probable that only the mere firſt rudiments of the Gothic religion had begun to be formed, when the Germans were firſt known to the Romans: And even when the Saxons made their irruptions into Britain, though they had the ſame general belief concerning Odin or Woden, Thor and Frigga, &c. yet probably the complete ſyſtem had not arrived to the full maturity it afterwards attained under the inventive hands of the Scalds.

THE eſſential difference remarked above, between the Religion of the Celtic and Gothic nations, in their Tenets, Inſtitutions and Worſhip, affords a ſtrong proof that they were two races of men *ab origine* diſtinct: The ſame truth is proved ſtill more ſtrongly, if poſſible, by their difference in LANGUAGE; this is an argument of fact, that amounts in queſtions of this nature almoſt to demonſtration.

Tacitus

Tacitus aſſures us ¶, that the ancient Britiſh language was very little different from that ſpoken in Gaul; *Sermo haud multum diverſus:* There was probably no more than a ſmall difference in dialect. But that the Gauliſh language widely differed from that of the Germans, appears from the whole current of hiſtory. Thus Cæſar not only aſſerts in the paſſage above quoted, (pag. xi. Note.) that the Gauls differed in language from the Belgæ, but plainly ſhows that the German and Gauliſh languages were very different, when he tells us that Arioviſtus, a German prince, only learnt to ſpeak the latter by his long reſidence in Gaul *. Again, Suetonius tells us, that Caligula, returning from his fruitleſs expedition againſt the Germans, in order to grace his triumph with an appearance of priſoners of that nation, for want of real Germans, choſe from among the Gauls ſuch as were of very tall ſtature, whom he cauſed to let their hair grow long, and to colour it red, to learn the German language, and to adopt German names; and thus he paſſed them off for priſoners from Germany †. Theſe, and other proofs from Tacitus, are produced by Pelloutier himſelf, though he afterwards endeavours to obviate their force, by pretending that the languages of Gaul and Germany differed only in dialect, &c ‡. But that they were radically and eſſentially different, will appear beyond contradiction, to any one that will but uſe his eyes and compare any of the living languages which are deſcended from theſe two ancient tongues. This queſtion receives ſo clear, ſo full, and ſo eaſy a ſolution, by barely inſpecting ſuch of the languages of Celtic and Gothic origin as are now extant, that to conclude the inquiry, I ſhall only lay before the reader Specimens of them both.

That the languages now ſpoken in Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Holland and England are all derived

¶ See above, pag. v. Note †.

* *Qua multa jam Arioviſtus longingua conſuetudine utebatur.* De Bell. Gall. lib. i. c. 47.

† Sueton. Caligula. c. 47. ‡ Pellout. vol. I. liv, i. ch. xv.

from

from or allied to the ancient German no one can deny; becauſe the words are viſibly the ſame in them all, only differing in dialect. On the other hand, that the ancient Britiſh was a language very little different from that of the Gauls, we have the expreſs teſtimony of Tacitus above-mentioned. Let us now compare the ſeveral dialects of the ancient Britiſh, viz. the Welſh §, the Armoric and the Corniſh, and ſee whether they contain the moſt diſtant reſemblance to any of the Teutonic dialects above mentioned.

Whoever looks into the following Specimens, will obſerve, that the modern Engliſh and German are two languages evidently derived from one common ſource; almoſt all the words in both being radically the ſame; and yet it is near 1200 years ſince the Engliſh language was tranſplanted out of Germany, and cut off from all intercourſe with the mother tongue. In the mean time, the people who have ſpoke it have undergone amazing revolutions and changes in their government, religion, laws and manners, and their language in particular has been ſubject to more than common innovations. On the other hand, let him compare the ſame Engliſh ſpecimen with that of the Welſh language, and ſee if he can diſcover the moſt diſtant reſemblance between them: And yet both theſe are ſpoken upon the ſame iſland, and that by fellow citizens, who for many hundred years have been ſubjects to the ſame prince, governed by the ſame laws, have profeſſed the ſame religion, and adopted nearly the ſame ſyſtem of manners: And now at laſt, after all this intercourſe, what two languages can be more unlike? Can this radical diſſimilitude be called only a difference in dialect? During the rude ages prior to hiſtory,

§ That the preſent Welſh language is the genuine daughter of the ancient Britiſh, ſee proved (if it needs any proof) in ROWLAND's *Mona Antiqua reſtaurata*. 2d. edit. 1766. 4to. ſect. iv. p. 35. &c. See alſo above, p. v. note †.

See likewiſe in CAMDEN's *Britannia*, his Eſſay, *De primis Incolis*, &c. Where that great Antiquary ſhows the immediate deſcent of the preſent WELSH nation from the ancient BRITONS, and their near affinity to the old inhabitants of GAUL; but eſpecially proves, by innumerable inſtances, the ſtrong connection between their ſeveral LANGUAGES.

before

before the Britons or Germans were invaded by other nations, or had adopted any foreign refinements, while both people were under the uninterrupted influence of their original inſtitutions, cuſtoms and manners, no reaſon can be aſſigned why their language ſhould undergo any material alterations. A ſavage people, wholly occupied by their preſent animal wants, aim at no mental or moral improvements, and are ſubject to no conſiderable changes. In this ſtate, their language being affected by none of the cauſes that commonly introduce very great innovations, will continue for many ages nearly the ſame. The great cauſes that introduce the moſt conſiderable changes in language, are invaſions of foreigners, violent alterations in religion and laws, great improvements in literature, or refinements in manners. None of theſe, ſo far as we know, had happened either to the Germans or Britons before the time of Cæſar, and yet even then there appeared no reſemblance between the languages of theſe two people. On the other hand, all theſe cauſes have been operating with combined force ever ſince, and yet no conſiderable reſemblance has obtained between the languages of England and Wales; nor has the radical affinity between thoſe of England and Germany been effaced or deſtroyed. Upon what grounds then can it be pretended, that the ancient languages of Gaul and Germany flowed from one common ſource? Or who will believe ſo improbable a fact?

M. Pelloutier tells us ‖, that "it having been pretended that the ancient Celtic is preſerved to this day "in the languages of Wales and Brittany in France, "he had looked into a few Gloſſaries of the Welſh "and Armoric tongues ¶, and had indeed diſcovered "that

‖ Hiſt. des Celtes, vol. I. p. 155.

¶ The ARMORIC language, now ſpoken in Brittany in France, is a dialect of the WELSH; that province being peopled with a colony from Britain in the 4th century; and though the two people have been ſeparated ſo many ages, and have been ſubject to two nations ſo different in their laws, religion and manners, ſtill the two languages contain ſo ſtrong a reſemblance, that in our late conqueſt of Belliſle, ſuch of our ſoldiers

" that SEVERAL words of the ancient Celtic were, in " effect, preſerved in thoſe tongues :" But he plainly hints, that he could not conſider the bulk of the language as there perpetuated; and indeed, conſidering how thick a film the prejudice of ſyſtem had drawn over his eyes, it is a wonder he could diſcover any Celtic words at all: For he, taking it for granted that the High-Dutch language was the genuine Celtic, only looked for ſuch words as bore any reſemblance to that tongue; and there being, as indeed there are, very few that have any ſimilitude, no wonder that he found ſo few Celtic words in a genuine Celtic language *.

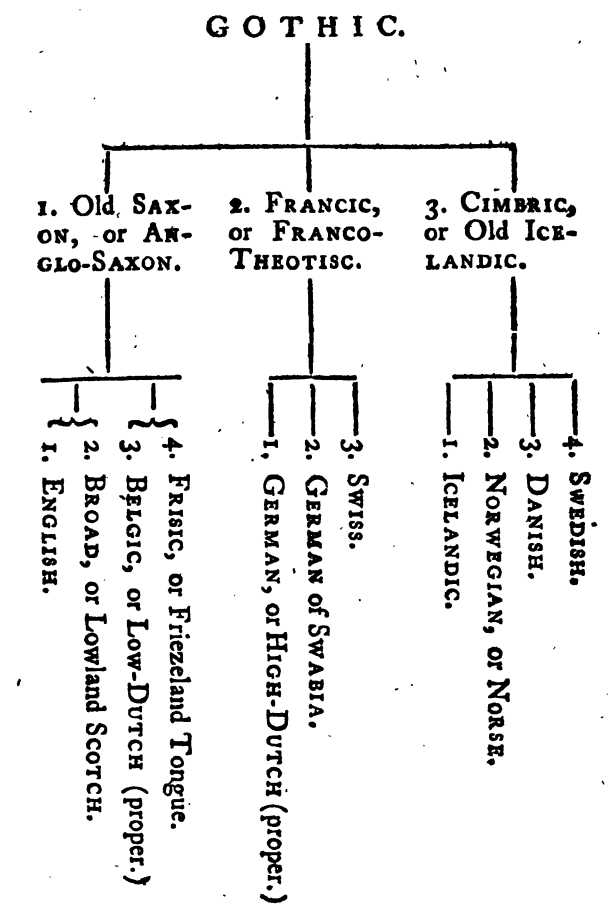
ſoldiers as came out of Wales were eaſily underſtood by the country people, and with their Welſh language, ſerved for interpreters to the other ſoldiers who only ſpoke Engliſh. This is a fact related to the Editor by a perſon who was there.—Perhaps, upon comparing the Specimens ſubjoined, the two dialects may appear to the eye more remote from each other, than the above relation ſuppoſes; but, it may be obſerved, that their orthography not having been ſettled in concert, the ſame ſound may have been expreſſed by very different combinations of letters, and the other differences may be only thoſe of idiom; ſo that the two languages, when ſpoken, may have a much greater reſemblance, than appears upon paper to a perſon ignorant of them both. To give one inſtance; the Welſh word *Drwg*, and the Armoric *Drouc*, (Eng. EVIL.) though ſo differently written, are in ſound no further diſtant than *Droog* and *Drook*, the vowels in both being pronounced exactly alike.

* It is much to be lamented that a Writer of ſo much learning, ſagacity and diligence as Monſ. PELLOUTIER, ſhould have ſpoiled, by one unfortunate hypotheſis, ſo excellent a work as his HISTORY OF THE CELTS, after all, certainly is. Had he not been drawn into this fundamental error, which infects his whole book; but on the contrary had been apprized of the radical diſtinction between the GOTHIC and CELTIC antiquities; had he aſſigned to each people the ſeveral deſcriptions which occur of them in ancient hiſtory; had he pointed out the diſtinct features of their reſpective characters, and ſhown in what particulars they both agreed, and wherein they differed; had he endeavoured to aſcertain the limits of each people in ancient Europe, and ſhown by which of them the ſeveral countries were formerly inhabited, and from which of them the modern nations are chiefly deſcended; he would then have performed a noble taſk, and have deſerved equally well of the paſt and future ages: His Book, inſtead of being a perpetual ſource of miſtake and confuſion, would then have ſerved as a clue to guide us through the labyrinth of ancient hiſtory, and he would have raiſed a noble monument to the memory alike of the CELTS and GOTHS, from one or other of which ancient people ſo many great nations are deſcended.

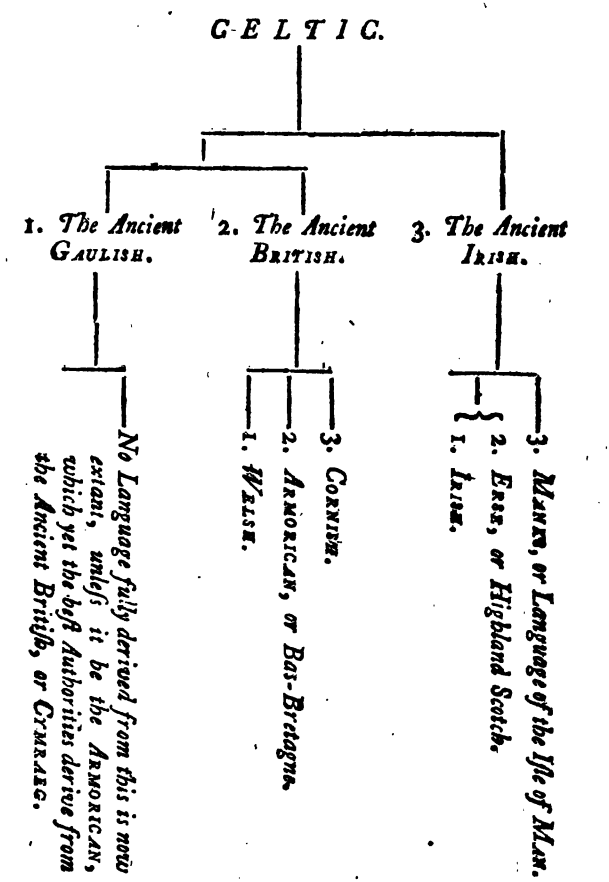
 I ſhall

I ſhall now proceed to lay before the Reader SPECIMENS of the GOTHIC and CELTIC Languages, properly claſſed and confronted with each other: Which, it is apprehended, will decide this queſtion better than any conjectural or moral reaſoning.

That the SPECIMENS may be the better underſtood, it will be uſeful to give a ſhort GENEALOGICAL TABLE, ſhowing what particular Languages are deſcended from



from thoſe two great Mother Tongues, by what immediate Branches they derive their deſcent, and what degree of affinity they ſeverally bear to each other. This ſcheme of the GOTHIC Languages is copied from the Preface to Dr. HICKES's *Inſtitutiones Grammaticæ Anglo-Saxonicæ, &c. Oxon.* 1689. *4to.* this of the CELTIC Tongues, from the beſt writers I have met with on the ſubject.



SPECIMENS of the GOTHIC LANGUAGES.

The ancient GOTHIC of ULPHILAS *.

Atta unſar thu in Himinam. 1. Veihnai Namo thein. 2. Quimai thiudinaſſus theins. 3. Vairthai Vilja theins, ſue in Himina, jah ana Airthai. 4. Hlaif unſarana thana ſinteinan gif uns himmadaga. 5. Jah aflet uns thatei Sculans ſijaima ſua ſue jah veis afletam thaim Skulam unſaraim. 6. Jah ni bringais uns in Fraiſtubnjai. 7. Ak lauſei uns af thamma Ubilin. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn's *Oratio Dominica in diverſas omnium fere Gentium Linguas verſa, &c. Amſt.* 1715. 4to. p. 53. and from *Sacrorum Evangeliorum Verſio Gothica Ed. Edw. Lye. Oxon.* 1750. 4to. p. 9.]

The ANCIENT LANGUAGES derived from the GOTHIC.

I.	II.	III.
ANGLO-SAXON.	FRANCO-THEOTISC.	CIMBRIC, or old ICELANDIC.
Uren Fader, thic arth in Heofnas. 1. Sie gehalgud thin Noma. 2. To cymeth thin Ryc. 3. Sie thin Willa ſue is in Heofnas, and in Eortho. 4. Uren Hlaf oferwiſtliç ſel us to daeg. 5. And forgeſe us Scylda urna, ſue we forgefan Scyldgum urum. 6. And no inlead uſig in Cuſtnung. 7. Ah gefrig uſich from Ifle. Amen.	Fater unſer thu tharbiſt in Himile. 1. Si geheilagot thin Namo. 2. Queme thin Rihhi. 3. Si thin Willo, ſo her in Himile iſt o ſi her in Erdu. 4. Unſar Brot tagalihhaz gib uns huitu. 5. Inti furlaz uns nuſara Sculdi ſo uuir furlazames unſaron Sculdigon. 6. Inti ni gileiteſt unſih in Coſtunga. 7. Uzouh arloſi unſi fon Ubile. Amen.	Fader uor, ſom eſt i Himlum. 1. Halgad warde thitt Nama. 2. Tilkomme thitt Rikie. 3. Skie thin Vilie, ſo ſom i Himmalam, ſo och po Iordanne. 4. Wort dachlicha Brodh gif os i dagh. 5. Ogh forlat os uora Skuldar, ſo ſom ogh vi forlate them os Skildighe are. 6. Ogh inled os ikkie i Freſtalſan. 7. Utan frels os ifra Ondo. Amen.
[From Chamberlayn, p. 56.]	[From Chamberlayn, p. 61.]	[From Chamberlayn, p. 54.]

* This is alſo called MOESO-GOTHIC, being the Dialect of the Goths in Moeſia, where Ulphilas was Biſhop. See below, p. 366.

SPECIMENS of the CELTIC LANGUAGES.

☞ I am not able to produce any Specimen of the CELTIC, at leaſt any Verſion of the Lord's Prayer, which can be oppoſed in point of antiquity to the GOTHIC Specimen from ULPHILAC, who flouriſhed A. D. 365. —As the CELTS were ſettled in theſe countries long before the GOTHS, and were expoſed to various revolutions before their arrival, their Language has, as might be expected, undergone greater and earlier changes than the GOTHIC; ſo that no Specimen of the old original CELTIC is, I believe, now to be found.

The ANCIENT LANGUAGES derived from the CELTIC.

I.	II.	III.
ANCIENT GAULISH.	CAMBRIAN, or ANCIENT BRITISH.	ANCIENT IRISH, or GAEDHLIG.
Of this Language I cannot find any Specimen to be depended on.	*Eyen Taad rhuvn wyt yn y Neofoedodd.* 1. *Santeiddier yr Henvu tau.* 2. *Devedy dyrnas dau.* 3. *Guneler dy Wollys ar ryddayar megis ag yn y Nefi.* 4. *Eyn Bara beunyddvul dyro inni heddivu.* 5. *Ammaddeu ynny eyn deledion, megis ag i maddevu in deledvvir ninaw.* 6. *Agna thowys ni in brofedigaeth.* 7. *Namyn gwared ni rhag-Drug. Amen.* [From Chamberlayn, p. 47.]	*Our Narme ata ar Neamb.* 1. *Beanich a Tainin.* 2. *Go diga de Riogda.* 3. *Go denta du Hoill air Talm in marte ar Neamb.* 4. *Tabair deim aniugh ar Naran limbali.* 5. *Augus mai duin ar Fiach ambail maambid ar fiacha.* 6. *Naleig fin amaribh.* 7. *Ach faarſa fin o Olc. Amen.* [From Dr. Anthony Raymond's Introduction to the Hiſtory of Ireland, p. 2, 3, &c.] *

* The above Specimen of the ancient Iriſh is judged to be a thouſand years old. See O Connor's Diſſertation on the Hiſtory of Ireland. Dublin, 1766. 8vo.

SPECIMENS of the GOTHIC LANGUAGES.

I. MODERN LANGUAGES derived from the OLD SAXON.

I.

ENGLISH.

Our Father, which art in Heaven. 1. Hallowed be thy Name. 2. Thy Kingdom come. 3. Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven. 4. Give us this day, our daily Bread. 5. And forgive us our Debts as we forgive our Debtors. 6. And lead us not into Temptation. 7. But deliver us from Evil. Amen.

[From the Eng. Teſtament.]

II.

Broad SCOTCH.

Ure Fadir, whilk art in Hevin. 1. Hallouit be thy Naim. 2. Thy Kingdum cum. 3. Thy Wull be dun in Airth, as it is in Hevin. 4. Gie uſs this day ure daily Breid. 5. And forgie uſs ure Debts, aſs we forgien ure Debtouris. 6. And leid uſs na' into Temptation. 7. Bot deliver uſs frae Evil. Amen.

[From a Scotch Gentleman.]

III.

LOW-DUTCH, or BELGIC.

Onſe Vader, die daer zijt in de Hemelen. 1. Uwen Naem worde gheheylight. 2. U Rijcke kome. 3. Uwen Wille gheſchiede op der Aerden, gelijck in den Hemel. 4. Onſe dagelijckt Broodt gheeft ons heden. 5. Ende vergheeft ons onſe Schulden, ghelijck wy oock onſe Schuldenaren vergeven. 6. Ende en leyt ons niet in Verſoeckinge. 7. Maer verloſt ons vanden Booſen. Amen.

[From the New Teſt. in Dutch, Amſt. 1630. 12mo.]

IV.

FRISIC, or Friezeland Tongue.

Ws Haita duu derſtu biſte yne Hymil. 1. Dyn Name wird heiligt. 2. Dyn Rick tokomme. 3. Dyn Wille moet ſchoen, opt Yrtryck as yne Hymile. 4. Ws deilix Bræ jov ws jwed. 5. In verjou ws, ws Schylden, as wy vejac ws Schyldnirs. 6. In lied ws nact in Verſieking. 7. Din fry ws vin it Quæd. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 68.]

SPECIMENS of the CELTIC LANGUAGES.

II. MODERN LANGUAGES derived from the ANCIENT BRITISH, or CYMRAEG.

I.

WELSH, or CYMRAEG.

Ein Tâd, yr hwn wyt yn y Nefoedd. 1. *Sancteiddier dy Enw.* 2. *Deved dy Deyrnas.* 3. *Bydded dy Ewyllys ar y Ddaiar megis y mae yn y Nefoedd.* 4. *Dyro i ni Heddyw ein Bara beunyddiol.* 5. *A madde ini ein Dyledion fel y maddeuwn ni i'n Dyledwyr.* 6. *Ag nag arwain ni i Brofedigaeth.* 7. *Eithr gwared ni rhag Drwg. Amen.*

[Communicated by a Gent. of Jesus College Oxon.]

II.

ARMORIC, or Language of Britanny in France.

Hon Tad, pehudij ſou en Eſaou. 1. *Da Hanou bezet ſanctifiet.* 2. *Devet aornamp da rouantelaez.* 3. *Da eol bezet graet en Douar, eual maz eon en Euf.* 4. *Ró dimp hyziou hon Bara pemdeziec.* 5. *Pardon dimp hon pechedou, eual ma pardonomp da nep pegant ezomp offanczet.* 6. *Ha na dilaes quet a hanomp en Temptation.* 7. *Hoguen hon diliur diouz Drouc. Amen.*

[From Chamberlayn, p. 51.]

III.

CORNISH.

Ny Taz, ez yn Neau. 1. *Bonegat yw tha Hanaw.* 2. *Tha Gwlakoth doaz.* 3. *Tha bonagath bogweez en nore poceragen Neau.* 4. *Roe thenyen dythma gon dyth Bara givians.* 5. *Ny gan rabn u.eery cara ny givians mens.* 6. *O cabin ledia ny nara idn Tentation.* 7. *Buz dilver ny thart Doeg. Amen.*

[From Chamberlayn, p. 50.]

SPECIMENS of the GOTHIC LANGUAGES.

II. MODERN LANGUAGES derived from the ANCIENT GERMAN, or FRANCIC, &c.

I.

HIGH-DUTCH, (proper.)

Unſer Vater in dem Himmel. 1. Dein Name werde geheiliget. 2. Dein Reich komme. 3. Dein Wille geſchehe auf Erden, wie im Himmel. 4. Unſer taeglich Brodt gib uns heute. 5. Und vergib uns unſere Schulden, wie wir unſern Schuldigern vergeben. 6. Und fuehre uns nicht in Verſuchung. 7. Sondern erloeſe uns von dem Vbel. Amen.

[From the common German New Teſtament, printed at London, 12mo.]

II.

HIGH-DUTCH of the SURVIAN Dialect.

Fatter auſar dear du biſcht em Hemmal. 1. Gehoyliget wearde dain Nam. 2. Zuakomme dain Reych. 3. Dain Will gſchea uff Earda as em Hemmal. 4. Auſar deglich Braud gib as huyt. 5. Und fergiab as auſre Schulda, wia wiar fergeaba auſarn Schuldigearn. 6. Und fuar as net ind Ferſuaching. 7. Sondern erlais as fom Ibal. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn's Oratio Dominica, p. 64.]

III.

The SWISS Language.

Vatter unſer, der du biſt in Himlen. 1. Geheyligt werd dyn Nam. 2. Zukumm uns dijn Rijch. 3. Dyn Will geſchahe, wie im Himmel, alſo auch [illegible] Erden. 4. Gib uns hüt unſer taglich Brot. 5. Und vergib uns unſere Schulden, wie auch wir vergaben unſern Schuldneren. 6. Und fuhr uns nicht in Verſuchnyſs. 7. Sunder erlos uns von dem Boſen. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 65.]

SPECIMENS of the CELTIC LANGUAGES.

III. MODERN LANGUAGES derived from the ANCIENT IRISH.

I.

IRISH, or GAIDHLIG.

Ar nathair atá ar Neamh. 1. *Naomhthar Hainm.* 2. *Tigeadh do Rioghachd.* 3. *Deuntar do Thoil ar an Ttalámh, mar do nithear ar Neamh.* 4. *Ar naràn laéathamhail tabhair dhúinn a niu.* 5. *Agus maith dhúinn ar Bhfiacha, mar mhaithmidne dar bhféitheamhnuibh fein.* 6. *Agus na léig sinn a ccathughadh.* 7. *Achd sáor sinn ó Olc. Amen.*

[From Bishop Bedel's Irish Bible, Lond. 1690. 8vo.]

II.

ERSE, or GAIDHLIG ALBANNAICH.

Ar n' Athair ata air Neamh. 1. *Gu naombaichear t Ainm.* 2. *Tigeadh do Rioghachd.* 3. *Deanthar do Thoil air an Tálamh mar a nithear air Neamh.* 4. *Tabhair dhuinn an diu ar n Aran laitheil.* 5. *Agus maith dhuinn ar Fiacha amhuil mar mhaithmid d'ar luchd-fiachaibh *.* 6. *Agus na leig am buaireadh sinn.* 7. *Ach saor sinn o Olc. Amen.*

* Feichneinibh.

[From the New Testament in the Erse Language, printed at Edinburgh, 1767. 8vo. Mat. vi. 9.]

III.

MANKS, or Language of the ISLE of MAN.

Ayr ain, t'ayns Niau; 1. *Casherick dy row dt' Ennym.* 2. *Dy jig dty Reeriaght.* 3. *Dt'aigney dy row jeant er y Thalao, myr te ayns Niau.* 4. *Cur dooin nyn Arran jiu as gaghlaa.* 5. *As leih dooin nyn loghtyn, myr ta shin leih dauesyn ta jannoo loghtyn nyn' oc.* 6. *As ny leeid shin ayns miclagh.* 7. *Agh livrey shin veih Olk. Amen.*

[From the Liturgy in Manks, printed at London, 1765. 8vo.]

SPECIMENS of the GOTHIC LANGUAGES.

III. MODERN LANGUAGES derived from the ANCIENT SCANDINAVIAN, or ICELANDIC, called (by ſome Writers) CIMBRIC, or CIMBRO-GOTHIC.

I. ICELANDIC.

Fader vor thu ſom ert a Himnum. 1. Helgeſt thitt Nafn. 2. Tilkome thitt Riike. 3. Verde thinn Vilie, ſo a Jordu, ſem a Himne. 4. Gieff thu oſs i dag vort daglegt Braud. 5. Og fiergieff oſs vorar Skulder, ſo ſem vier fierergiefum vorum Skuldinautum. 6. Og inleid oſs ecke i Freiſtne. 7. Heldr frelſa thu oſs fra Illu. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 70.]

II. NORWEGIAN, or NORSE.

Wor Fader du ſom eſt y Himmelen. 1. Gehailiget worde dit Nafn. 2. Tilkomma os Riga dit. 3. Din Wilia geſkia paa Iorden, ſom handt er udi Himmelen. 4. Giff os y Tag wort dagliga Brouta. 5. Och forlaet os wort Skioldt, ſom wy forlata wora Skioldon. 6. Och lad os icke homma voi Friſtelſe. 7. Man frals os fra Onet. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 71.]

III. DANISH.

Vor Fader i Himmelen. 1. Helligt vorde dit Navn. 2. Tilkomme dit Rige. 3. Vorde din Villie, paa Iorden ſom i Himmelen. 4. Giff oſs i Dag vort daglige Bred. 5. Oc forlad oſs vor Skyld, ſom wi forlade vore Skyldener. 6. Oc leede oſs icke i Friſtelſe. 7. Men frels os fra Ont. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 70.]

IV. SWEDISH.

Fader war ſom aſt i Himmelen. 1. Helgat warde titt Nampn. 2. Till komme titt Ricke. 3. Skei tin Wilie ſaa paa Iordenne, ſom i Himmelen. 4. Wart dagliga Brod giff oſs i Dagh. 5. Och forlat oſs wara Skulder ſa ſom ock wi forlaten them oſs Skildege aro. 6. Och inleed oſs icke i Freſtelſe. 7. Ut an frals oſs i fra Ondo. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 79.]

SPECIMENS of the FINN and LAPLAND TONGUES.

I. The FINN Language.

Iſa meidan joca olet taiwaſſa. 1. *Pyhitetty olcon ſinum Nimes.* 2. *Lahes tulcon ſinum Waldacundas.* 3. *Olcon ſinun tahtos niin maaſa cuin taiwaſa.* 4. *Anna meile tanapaiwana meidan joca paiwainen leipam.* 5. *Sa anna meille meidan ſyndim andexi nuncuin mekin andex annam meidan welwottiſtem.* 6. *Ja ala johdata meita kiuſauxen.* 7. *Mutta paaſta meita pahaſta. Amen.*

[From Chamberlayn, p. 82.]

II. The LAPLAND Tongue.

Atki mijam juco lee almenſiſne. 1. *Ailis ziaddai tu Nam.* 2. *Zweigubatta tu Ryki.* 3. *Ziaddus tu Willio naukuchte almeſne nau ei edna mannal.* 4. *Wadde mijai udni mijan ſært pæſwen laibebm.* 5. *Jah andagaſloite mi jemijan ſuddoid, naukuchte mije andagaſloitebt kudi mije welgogas lien.* 6. *Jah ſiſſalaidi mijabni.* 7. *Æle tocko kæckxællebma pahaſt. Amen.*

[From Chamberlayn, p. 83.]

A SPECIMEN of the CANTABRIAN or BISCAYAN LANGUAGE, ſtill preſerved in SPAIN.

The BASQUE.

Gure Aita keruétan caréña. 1. *Erabilbedi ſainduqui çure Jeno.* 2. *Ethorbedi çure Erreſſuma.* 3. *Eguinbedi çure Borondatea çeru'an becala turre'an ere.* 4. *Emandieçagucu egun gure egunorozco oguia.* 5. *Eta barkhadietcatgutçu gure çorrac gucere gure cordunei barkhatcendiotçaguten becala.* 6. *Eta ezgaitçatcu utc tentacionétan erortcerat.* 7. *Aitcitic beguiragaitcatçu gaitc gucistaric. Halabiz.*

[From Chamberlayn, p. 44.]

REMARKS

ON THE

FOREGOING VERSIONS:

AND FIRST

Of the GOTHIC SPECIMENS.

THE great and uniform ſimilitude, diſcoverable at firſt ſight between all the Specimens of the Gothic or Teutonic Languages, muſt be very ſtriking, even to foreigners unacquainted with theſe Tongues: But to thoſe that know them intimately the affinity muſt appear much nearer and ſtronger, becauſe many words that were originally the ſame, are diſguiſed by the variations of Pronunciation and Orthography, as well as by the difference of Idiom: Thus, the German *Geheiliget*, and the Engliſh *Hallowed*, are both equally derived from the Teutonic HELIG, Holy.

It may further be obſerved, that Time has introduced a change, not only in the Form, but in the Meaning of many Words, ſo that though they are equally preſerved in the different Dialects, they no longer retain the ſame uniform appearance, nor can be uſed with propriety to expreſs the ſame exact meaning. Thus, the Latin Word *Panis* is tranſlated in the Gothic and Anglo-Saxon *Hlaf*, or *Hlaif*, which word is ſtill current among us in its derivative *Loaf*, but with a variation of ſenſe that made it leſs proper to be uſed in the Pater-noſter than the other Teutonic word BREAD, which is preſerved in all the other Dialects, but in a great variety of Forms. Thus from the old Francic *Brot*, or Cimbric *Brodh*, come the Swiſs, *Brot*; The Swediſh, *Brod*; The High and

and Low Dutch, *Broodt*; The Norſe, *Brauta*; The Icelandic, *Braud*; The Engliſh, *Bread*; The Scottiſh, *Breid*; The Daniſh, *Bred*; and the Friſic, *Bræ*.

Again, it is poſſible that in many of theſe Languages there was more than one word to expreſs the ſame idea; and if there was a variety, then the different Tranſlators, by uſing ſome of them one word, and the reſt another, have introduced a greater difference into their Verſions than really ſubſiſted in their ſeveral Languages. Of this kind I eſteem the word *Atta, (Pater)* uſed by Ulphilas, whoſe countrymen had probably another word of the ſame origin as FADER or FATHER, as well as all the other Gothic nations: So again, the Anglo-Saxons (beſides their word HLAF) had probably another term, whence we derived our preſent word BREAD. As for the Gothic word ATTA, (whence the Friſic *Haita*, and perhaps the Lapland *Atki*,) however Ulphilas came by it, it ſeems evidently of the ſame origin as the old Cantabrian *Aita*.

Laſtly, a great difference will appear to Foreigners from the different arrangement of the ſame words, but more eſpecially from the difference of Tranſlation; for the Pater-noſter has not been rendered in the ſeveral Verſions in the ſame uniform manner. Thus, in the High Dutch and Daniſh, the firſt ſentence is expreſſed contractedly, *Noſter Pater in Cœlis*. In the Gothic of Ulphilas, *Pater Noſter tu in Cœlis*. In the others more at large, *Pater Noſter tu es in Cœlis*, or *Noſter Pater qui es in Cœlis*, &c. &c. And what is ſtill more remarkable in the Anglo-Saxon, the fourth Petition is rendered, not *panem noſtrum quotidianum*, but *panem noſtrum ſupernaturalem*; as it was interpreted alſo by ſome of the ancient Fathers.

But to confirm the foregoing Remarks by one general Illuſtration, I ſhall confront the HIGH DUTCH Specimen, with a literal ENGLISH Verſion, which will ſupport the aſſertion made above, (p. xxi.) that theſe two Languages ſtill prove their affinity, notwithſtanding the different mediums through which they have deſcended, and the many ages that have elapſed ſince their ſeparation.

GERMAN.

GERMAN.	ENGLISH.
Unſar	Our [Ure, *Northern Dialect* *]
Vater	Father [Vather, Vader, *Somerſetſhire Dialect.*]
in dem Himmel.	in the Heaven. [in them Heavens, *vulgar Dialect.*]
1. Dein Name werde geheiliget.	1. Thine Name were [may it be] hallowed.
2. Dein Reich komme.	2. Thine [Kingdom †] come.
3. Dein Wille geſchehe auf Erden, wie in Himmel.	3. Thine Will ſo be of [in] Earth, as in Heaven.
4. Unſar taeglich Brodt. gib uns heute ‡.	4. Our daily Bread give us [this Day.]
5. Und vergib uns unſere Schulden, wie wir unſern	5. And forgive [vorgive, *Somerſetſhire Dialect.*] us our [Debts, *Debita*, Lat.] as we our [ou'rn, *Ruſtic Dialect.*]
Schuldigern vergiben.	[Debtours, *Debitores*, Lat] forgive. [vorgiven, *Somerſetſhire Dialect.*]
6. Und fuehre uns nicht in Verſuchung.	6. And [lead] us not in [into] [Temptation, Lat.]
7. Sondern erloeſe uns von dem Ubel.	7. But looſe [deliver, *French*] us from the Evil.

‡ Perhaps from the Lat. *bodie.*

* This is evidently a contraction of *Unſar*, antiqu. *Unſer*, ſc. U'er, Ure. In our midland counties, *Our* is pronounced *Wor* or *Wer*, like the Swediſh or Norſe.

The Swiſs, and ſome of the other German Dialects give the firſt ſentence more fully, thus; *Du biſt in Himlen:* This is literally the ſame with our vulgar phraſe, *Thou beeſt*, or *biſt in Heaven.*

† The old Teutonic word *Rick*, is ſtill preſerved in the termination of our Engliſh *Biſhop-rick*; and even *King-rike* for *Kingdome* was in uſe among

Before I quit this ſubject of the GOTHIC or TEUTONIC Languages, I muſt obſerve, that the old Scandinavian Tongue is commonly called CIMBRIC, or CIMBRO-GOTHIC, as it was the dialect that chiefly prevailed among the Gothic Tribes, who inhabited the *Cimbrica Cherſoneſus*, &c. But whether the ancient CIMBRI, and their confederates the TEUTONES, who made the irruption into the Roman Empire in the time of Marius †, were a CELTIC or a GOTHIC people, may perhaps admit of ſome diſquiſition.

They who contend that they were CELTS, may urge the reſemblance of the name of *Cimbri* to that of *Cymri*, by which the Britons have always called themſelves in their own language: They may alſo produce the authority of Appian, who expreſsly calls the *Cimbri* CELTS; as well as of ſeveral of the Roman Authors, who ſcruple not to name them GAULS ‡. It may further be obſerved in favour of this opinion, that the emigration of ſo large a body of the old Celtic inhabitants, would facilitate the invaſion of the Gothic tribes who ſucceeded them in theſe northern ſettlements, and will account for the rapid conqueſts of Odin and his Aſiatic followers: It might alſo be conjectured, that the ſmall ſcattered remains of theſe old Celtic Cimbri, were the Savage Men who lurked up and down in the foreſts and mountains, as deſcribed by the ancient Icelandic Hiſtorians ‖, and who, in their ſize and ferocity, ſo well correſpond with the

among our countrymen ſo late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth: Thus, in the famous libel of STUBS, intitled, "The Diſcoverie of a gaping "Gulf, whereinto England is like to be ſwallowed by another French "Marriage," &c. printed Anno 1579. ſmall 8vo. (Sign. C. 7. b.) The Author talks of the Queen's "having the Kingrike in her own per-"ſon;" meaning the regal dominion, authority, &c. See alſo Verſtigan's Antiquities, Lond. 1634. p. 215.

† Deſcribed below, in Chap. II.

‡ "APPIANUS *in Illyricis* Cimbros *Celtas*, addito *quos Cimbros vocant*, "appellavit. Et evolve FLORUM, *Lib. III. Cap.* 3. SALUSTIUM *Bell. "Jugurth. in fine.* RUFUM *Brev. Cap. VI.* qui omnes *Cimbros* diſerté "*Gallos*, et *ab extremis Galliæ* profugos, nominarunt." Speneri Notitia Germaniæ Antiquæ, Hal. Magd. 1717. 4to. p. 123.

‖ See below, p. 35, &c.

deſcrip-

deſcriptions given us of their countrymen that invaded the Roman Empire. Thus far ſuch an opinion is equally conſiſtent, both with the Roman and Northern Hiſtorians.

On the other hand, that the *Cimbri* of Marius were not a Celtic, but a German or a Gothic people, is an opinion that may be ſupported with no ſlight arguments. On this head it may be obſerved, with our Author Monſ. Mallet, "that the Ancients generally "conſidered this people as a branch of the Ger-"mans *," and that their tall ſtature and general character rather correſponds with the deſcription of the Germans than of the Celts. That as for the name of *Cimbri* or *Cimber*, it is reſolvable into a word in the German Language, which ſignifies WARRIOR or WARLIKE †: And that the authorities of the Roman Hiſtorians cannot much be depended on, becauſe (as has been before obſerved ‡) they were ſeldom exact in the names they gave to the Barbarous Nations. It may further be urged, that the facility with which the Cimbri made their way through Germany into

* See below, p. 21.

† *Germanis quidem* Camp *exercitum aut locum ubi exercitus caſtra metatur, ſignificat; inde ipſis vir caſtrenſis et militaris* Kemffer *et* Kempher *et* Kemper *et* Kimber *et* Kamper, *pro varietate dialectorum votatur; vocabulum hoc noſtro* [*ſc. Anglico*] *ſermone nondum penitus exolevit; Norfolciences enim plebeio et proletario ſermone dicunt* "He is a Kemper Old "Man," *i. e. Senex vegetus eſt.* Sheringham, p. 57. See alſo, KEMPERYE MAN, in the Reliques of Ancient Engliſh Poetry, Vol. I. p. 70.

Sheringham afterwards adds, *Illud autem hoc loco omittendum non eſt,* CIMBROS *quoque à proceritate corporis hoc nomen habere potuiſſe* - - - - Kimber *enim aliâ ſignificatione hominem gigantea corporis mole præditum deſignat.* "*Danico hodie idiomate,* (inquit Pontanus, in additam. ad "Hiſt. Dan. lib. 1.) Kimber *ſive* Kempe *et* Kemper *non bellatorem tan-*"*tùm, ſed proprie Gigantem notat.*" Sheringh. p. 58. From hence it ſhould ſeem, that a gigantic perſon was called *Kimber*, from his reſemblance to the ancient *Cimbri*; rather than that this people were called *Cimbri*, from their gigantic ſize; ſo that this favours the opinion that the Cimbri were a different Race from the ancient Danes, &c. becauſe no nation would think of calling themſelves Giants; for if they were all uniformly gigantic, there would appear to themſelves nothing remarkable in their ſize: whereas this would ſtrike another people, as a primary and leading Diſtinction.

‡ See p. vi.

Gaul,

Gaul, renders it probable that they were rather a branch of the German people, than of a race in conſtant enmity with them, like the Celts, and who, upon that account, would have been oppoſed in their paſſage; eſpecially as the Germans appear in theſe countries rather to have prevailed over the Celts, and to have forced them weſtward, driving them out of many of their ſettlements. But laſtly, if the Cimbri had been a Celtic people, then ſuch of them as were left behind in their own country, and were afterwards ſwallowed up among the ſucceeding Gothic Tribes who invaded Scandinavia, would have given a tincture of their Celtic Language to that branch of the Teutonic, which was ſpoke in theſe countries: Or, at leaſt, we ſhould have found more Celtic names of Mountains, Rivers, &c. in the Cimbric Cherſoneſe than in other Gothic Settlements: But I do not find that either of theſe is the caſe; the old Icelandic ſeems to be as free from any Celtic mixture, as any other Gothic Dialect; nor is there any remarkable prevalence of Celtic names in the peninſula of Jutland, more than in any part of Germany; where I believe its former Celtic inhabitants have up and down left behind them a few names of places, chiefly of natural ſituations, as of Rivers, Mountains, &c. This at leaſt is the caſe in England, where, although the Britons were ſo intirely extirpated, that ſcarce a ſingle word of the Welſh Language was admitted by the Saxons; and although the names of Towns and Villages are almoſt univerſally of Anglo-Saxon derivation, yet the Hills, Foreſts, Rivers, &c. have generally retained their old Celtic names *.

But whether the old *Cimbri* were Celts or Goths, yet foraſmuch as from the time of Odin, both the Cimbrica Cherſoneſus, and all the neighbouring regions were become entirely Gothic ſettlements, the Gothic Dialect which prevailed in theſe countries is called by Antiquaries CIMBRIC, and CIMBRO-GO-

* See PENIGENT, ARDEN, AVON, &c. in Camden's Britannia, and that Author *paſſim*.

THIC:

THIC: It is alſo ſometimes termed Old ICELANDIC, becauſe many of the beſt writers in it came from Iceland, and becauſe the Cimbric has been more perfectly preſerved in that iſland than in any other ſettlement. To the old original mother tongue of all the Gothic Dialects, it has been uſual (after Verſtegan *) to give the name of TEUTONIC, not ſo much from the Teutones or *Teutoni*, who inhabited the Daniſh iſlands, and were brethren to the *Cimbri*, as from its being the ancient TUYTSH, the language of TUISTO †, and his votaries; the great Father and Deity of the German Tribes.

To conclude this ſubject; whoever would trace the ſeveral TEUTONIC Languages up to their ſource, and proceed upon ſure and ſolid principles in inquiries of this kind, need only have recourſe to that great and admirable work, *LINGUARUM Vett. Septentrionalium THESAURUS Grammatico-Criticus et Archæologicus Autore GEORGIO HICKES. S. T. P. Oxon.* 1705. 2 Vols. folio.

* Reſtitution of decayed Intelligence. 4to. *paſſim*. See alſo Speneri Notit. Antiq. Germ. L. 4. p. 104.

† *Celebrant Carminibus antiquis (quod unum apud illos. ſc. Germanos, memoria et annalium genus eſt)* TUISTONEM *Deum, Terrâ editum, et filium* MANNUM *originem gentis, conditoreſque.* Tacit. de Mor. German. This MANNUS is evidently MAN, the offspring of TUISTO, the ſupreme Deity.

Of the CELTIC SPECIMENS.

AS the ſtrong reſemblance of the ſeveral GOTHIC Specimens to each other, ſo their radical diſſimilitude to thoſe of CELTIC origin, muſt appear deciſive of the great queſtion diſcuſſed in the foregoing PREFACE. Had theſe two Languages ever had any pretenſions to be conſidered as congenial, the further ther we traced them back, the ſtronger would be the reſemblance between them; but the moſt ancient Specimens appear as utterly diſſimilar, as the moſt modern;

dern; not but here and there a word may have been accidentally caught up on either ſide: viz. borrowed by the Goths from the Celtic Language, and *vice verſâ*; or perhaps adopted by each of them from ſome third Language radically different from them both. Thus, from the Welſh *Tâd*, our vulgar have got the common Engliſh word *Dad* and *Daddy*: And from the French *Delivre*, are derived both the Engliſh *Deliver*, and the Armoric *Diluir*, whence the Corniſh *Dilver*.

In conformity to the opinion of the moſt knowing Antiquaries, I have given the IRISH and ERSE Tongues as deſcended from one common original with the *Cambrian*, or ancient *Britiſh* Languages, viz. the WELSH, ARMORIC, and CORNISH. But, to confeſs my own opinion, I cannot think they are equally derived from one common CELTIC Stock; at leaſt not in the ſame uniform manner as any two branches of the GOTHIC; ſuch, for inſtance, as the ANGLO-SAXON and FRANCIC, from the Old Teutonic. Upon comparing the two ancient Specimens given above in pag. xxvii. ſcarce any reſemblance appears between them; ſo that if the learned will have them to be ſtreams from one common fountain, it muſt be allowed, that one or both of them have been greatly polluted in their courſe, and received large inlets from ſome other channel.

But, notwithſtanding this apparent diſſimilitude, the celebrated Lluyd, and others who have inveſtigated this ſubject, firmly maintain, that there is a real affinity between the Iriſh and Cambrian Tongues, and that a great part of both Languages is radically the ſame. He has further ſhown, that many names of places in South-Britain, and even in Wales itſelf, the meaning of which is loſt in the Welſh Language, can only be explained from words now extant in the Iriſh and Erſe Tongues: An inconteſtible proof either that the Iriſh or Erſe Language originally prevailed all over the ſouthern parts of this iſland, or that it is of congenial origin with the Cambrian or Welſh, and ſo

has preſerved many words, which are now loſt in the other *.

Indeed a good reaſon may be aſſigned why the ſeveral branches of the Old CELTIC differ to the eye ſo much more than the derivatives of any other Language: viz. In the Celtic Tongue words are declined by changing, NOT the Terminations, but the Initial Letters in the oblique caſes, or by prefixing an article with an apoſtrophe (either expreſſed or implied); ſo that thoſe who are ignorant of this language are apt to confound the radical Letters, with ſuch as are merely ſuperadded and accidental; or to think two words utterly diſſimilar, that are only made ſo by an occaſional Prefix or a variety of Declenſion: To give one inſtance (out of innumerable) of the latter kind, the Britiſh word *Pen*, in conſtruction regularly aſſumes the form of *Ben*, *Phen* and *Mhen*. e. g.

Pen, a Head.
Pen gûr, a Man's Head.
i Ben, his Head.
i Phen, her Head.
y'm Mhen, my Head.

* LLUYD thinks both theſe cauſes have concurred. viz. I. That the anceſtors of the Iriſh and Highland Scots, ſc. the ancient GUYDHELIANS, were the old original Celts, who firſt inhabited this iſland: And that the *Cymri*, or Welſh, were another and different race of Celts, (a branch of the Celtic *Cimbri*) who ſucceeded the other, and drove them northwards. II. That the Language of both theſe people, though originally the ſame, had deſcended down through different channels, and was rendered ſtill more widely diſtant; 1. By the additional mixture of Cantabrian words imported into Ireland by the Scots, who came from Spain and ſettled among the old Guydelian Celts from Britain: And, 2. By the changes the Cymraeg or Welſh Language ſuffered during the ſubjection of 500 Years to the Romans, &c. (See Lluyd's WELSH and IRISH Prefaces, tranſlated in the Appendix to Nicholſon's IRISH HISTORICAL LIBRARY, &c. 1736. folio.)

See alſo MAITLAND'S "Hiſtory of Scotland, 2 Vols. folio," who has ſome things curious on this ſubject, particularly on the paſſage of the *Cimbri* into Britain; but the generality of his book ſhews a judgment ſo warped by national prejudice; is ſo evidently deſigned to ſupport a favourite hypotheſis, and is writ with ſuch a ſpirit of coarſe invective, that the Reader will be conſtantly led to ſuſpect that his quotations are unfair, and his arguments fallacious. To mention only one inſtance of this Writer's ſtrange perverſion of Hiſtory, he ſets out with denying, in the teeth of Cæſar and all the ancients, that the OLD BRITONS WERE EVER PAINTED!

Before I conclude theſe ſlight Remarks, I muſt beg leave to obſerve, that as the great ſubject of this preſent book is GOTHIC ANTIQUITIES, which I apprehend to be totally diſtinct from the CELTIC, I only pretend to be exact and preciſe as to the GOTHIC or TEUTONIC Languages; but do not take upon me to decide on any of the points which relate either to the CELTIC Antiquities or CELTIC Tongues. For this reaſon I avoid entering into the diſpute, which has of late ſo much intereſted our countrymen in North-Britain: viz. Whether the ERSE Language was firſt ſpoken in Scotland or Ireland. Before the inquiſitive Reader adopts either opinion, he would do well to conſider many curious hints, which are ſcattered up and down in LLUYD's moſt excellent *Archæologia Britannica*, 1707. fol. and eſpecially in his WELSH and IRISH Prefaces, referred to in the foregoing Note.

The Specimen of the ERSE or HIGHLAND SCOTTISH, in p. xxxi. is extracted from the New Teſtament lately publiſhed at Edinburgh, wherein this Language is called *Gaidhlig Albannaich*; and upon the authority of that book I have ſo named it here. This I mention by way of caveat againſt the cenſure of thoſe who contend that the true name is GAELIC or GALIC, and that this word is the ſame with GALLIC, the name of the ancient Language of GAUL. Without deciding the queſtion as to the origin of the ERSE Language itſelf, I muſt obſerve upon the ancient name of GALLIC, that this does not ſeem to have been uſed by the natives of GAUL themſelves, but to have been given them by foreigners: They called themſelves CELTÆ, and their Language CELTIC *; in

* *Qui ipſorum lingua* CELTÆ, *noſtra* GALLI *appellantur.* Cæſar de Bell. Gal. L. 1.——"CELTÆ, *the Gauls*, Gædil, Cadil, or Keill, "and in the plural, according to our dialect, Keiliet, or Keilt, (now "Guidhelod) *Iriſhmen.* The word *Keilt* could not be otherwiſe writ-"ten by the Romans, than *Ceilte* or *Celtæ.*" See Lluyd's Iriſh Preface, p. 207. in Nicholſon's Iriſh Hiſtorian.

in like manner as the inhabitants of Wales, though called WELSH by us, term themſelves CYMRU, and their own Language CYMRAEG; who at the ſame time call us SAISSONS, and our Tongue SAISSONAEG, thus reminding us of our Saxon origin.

In the ſame place the Reader will find many of the ancient names of offices, perſons, &c. mentioned by Cæſar as prevailing in Gaul, explained from the modern Iriſh Language, as, *Ambrox*, *Divitiacus*, *Vercingetorix*, *Vergaſillaunus*, *Vergobretus*, &c.

Of the FINN and LAPLAND Specimens: And of the CANTABRIAN or BASQUE.

THE two former of theſe are ſubjoined, in order to illuſtrate what our Author has ſaid below, in p. 38, 39.

Of the FINN Language it may be obſerved, that it appears quite original, and underived from any other Tongue with which we are acquainted. But as to that of the LAPLANDERS, it is apparently a derivative from ſeveral others: Many of the words are evidently borrowed from the FINN LANGUAGE, and others from the NORSE, mixed, it may be, with derivatives from the GREENLAND Tongue, or perhaps the SCLAVONIC. From the FINN Language are apparently borrowed theſe words in the Pater-noſter, viz. *Mijam*, *juco*, *laibebm*, *pahaſt*, &c. and theſe from the NORSE, or ſome ſiſter dialect, viz. *Nam*, *Ryki*, *Willio*, &c.

As to the CANTABRIAN or BASQUE, it has no apparent affinity with any dialect either of the TEUTONIC or CELTIC Languages. Yet LLUYD has given a liſt of derivatives from this Language which are ſtill extant in the IRISH Tongue, and which confirm the opinion that an ancient colony from Spain actually intermixed

intermixed among the original inhabitants of IRELAND.

To this excellent writer, ſo often quoted, I refer all ſuch as would proceed on ſure and ſolid grounds in their inquiries concerning the CELTIC LANGUAGE and ANTIQUITIES: A ſubject which has proved the great ſtumbling-block of modern Antiquaries and Etymologiſts, and which has occaſioned ſo many wild, abſurd, and childiſh publications, to the diſgrace of all etymology and ſcandal of literature. Inſtead of imitating the caution, diffidence, and modeſty of LLUYD, who ſpent ſeveral years in travelling and reſiding among the different branches of the CELTS, theſe writers make up a jargon of their own, which they call *Celtic*, and, without knowing any one of the ancient Languages truly, ſet out confidently to explain them all.

That I may not appear invidious, I will not produce inſtances of the dotage and folly of ſome of our countrymen in what they call Celtic Etymologies, and Illuſtrations of Celtic Antiquities; but will refer the Reader to a work of a ſuperior claſs, the celebrated *Memoires de la Langue Celtique par M.* BULLET. *Beſançon* 1754. 3 Vols. folio. This learned, and in other reſpects, ingenious writer, is a glaring inſtance how much a good judgment may be drawn away by a darling hypotheſis, and is a warning to others not to write upon ſubjects they do not underſtand: For, having little or no acquaintance with the Engliſh Language, he undertakes to explain, from his own imaginary Celtic Vocabulary, the names of innumerable places in England, in what he calls a *Deſcription Etymologique* *: Where, if he had confined himſelf to ſome of our Rivers, Mountains and Foreſts, he had ſtood ſome chance of being right, ſince many of theſe retain their old

* *Une Deſcription Etymologique des villes, rivieres, montagnes, forêts, curioſités naturelles des Gaules; de la meilleure partie del' Eſpagne et de l'Italie; de la Grande Britagne, dont les Gaulois ont été les primiers habitans.* This writer has, however, ſome things very ingenious and ſolid.

Britiſh names: But when he boldly proceeds to our names of Villages and Towns, which are moſt of them purely Saxon and Engliſh, he falls into ſuch diverting blunders as theſe, viz.

ACTON (which is from the Saxon *Ac*, an Oak, and *Ton*, a Town) he derives from *Ac*, a River, and *Ton*, Habitation.

ASTON (which is merely *Eaſt-town*, as in ſome parts of England *Eaſter* is ſtill called *After*) he will have from *As*, River, and *Ton*, Habitation.

AUKLAND (which is probably old Engliſh for OAK-LAND) he fetches from *Oc*, a little Hill, *Lan*, River, and *D* from *Dy*, Two.

COLBROKE, he ſays, comes from the Saxon *Broke*, a Bridge; i. e. a Bridge over the Colne.

DICH-MARSH, he derives from *Dich*, which he ſays is from *Dichlud*, Borne, and *Mar*, Water. *Dich-mar*, Land borne up by Water.

HANWELL, he ſays, is from *Han*, a Bending, and *Val*, in compoſition *Vel*, a River.

HIGHAM (a borough in Northamptonſhire, which ſtands on a hill, at ſome diſtance from any river, and which was doubtleſs named from its elevated ſituation, *High-ham*; i. e. the Home or Habitation on High Ground: See Verſtigan:) this writer derives from *J*, a River, and *Cam*, in compoſition *Gam*, a Bending.

NORTHAMPTON, (either ſo named in contradiſtinction to SOUTH-HAMPTON, or, according to Camden, originally *North-avonton*;) this egregious Etymologiſt derives from *Nor*, (*Embouchure*) the Mouth of a river, *Tan*, a River, and *Ton*, Habitation.

NORTHILL, (which I ſuppoſe is merely North-Hill) he derives from *Nor*, River, and *Tyle*, Habitation.

QUNDALE (contracted for Avon-dale) he derives from *Avon*, a River, and *Dal*, Incloſed, ſurrounded.

RINGWOOD (i. e. I ſuppoſe, a "Wood ring-fenced," a common foreſt term) he derives from *Ren* (*Partage*) a Diviſion, *Cw*, River, and *Hed*, a Foreſt.

STANFORD

STANFORD (i. e. Stone, or Stony Ford) he derives from *Stan* (*Embouchure*) a Mouth of a River, *Vor*, pronounced *For*, Near.

STRATTON (i. e. Street-Town, the name of a Town on the Watling-ſtreet) from *Strat*, Land near a River, and *Ton*, Habitation: Or, from *Ster*, Rivers, *At*, Junction or Joining, and *Ton*, Habitation.

UXBRIDGE, (ſuppoſed by ſome to be corrupted from Ouſe-bridge) he derives from *Uc*, River, and *Brig* (*Partage*) Diviſion.

Such are the derivations of a writer who ſets out to explain the meaning of Engliſh names of places, without underſtanding the ſignification of our common Engliſh words LAND, BROOK, MARSH, WELL, HIGH, NORTH, HILL, DALE, WOOD, FORD, STREET or BRIDGE!

So much for Celtic Etymologies!

POSTSCRIPT.

TO the modern Tongues derived from the Old CIMBRO-GOTHIC above mentioned in p. xxxii. may be added a Specimen of the Language ſpoken by the common people in the Iſles of Orkney. This is preſerved by Dr. Wallace, in his ACCOUNT of thoſe Iſlands, "Lond. 1700. 8vo." Who tells us it is called by the natives *Norns*. It ſeems to be a corruption of the NORSE, Icelandic, &c. and is as follows:

"Favor i ir i Chimrie. 1. Helleur ir i Nam thite. "2. Gilla coſdum thite cumma. 3. Veya thine mota "var gort o Yurn ſinna gort i Chimrie. 4. Gav "vus da on da dalight Brow vora. 5. Firgive vus "Sinna vora ſin vee firgive Sindara mutha vus. 6. "Lyv vus ye i Tumtation, 7. Min deſivera vus fro "Olt ilt. Amen.

☞ I ſuſpect the above Copy to be incorrectly printed by Wallace: that "Helleur" ſhould be "Hel-"leut," &c. &c.

☞ In the following Preface, our Author, Monſ. MALLET, extols the late King of Denmark, FREDERICK V. as a great patron of literature and promoter of knowledge: it is therefore but juſtice to that Monarch to mention a few of the literary undertakings which owe their riſe and eſtabliſhment to his bounty and love of Science.

I. He inſtituted a Society, conſiſting of four or five gentlemen, who have a ſalary of 400 l. per annum aſſigned them, purpoſely for the cultivation of the Daniſh Language, and illuſtration of the Icelandic and Northern Antiquities. They have in their poſſeſſion a great quantity of manuſcripts relative to the latter; and, among the reſt, the intire VOLUSPA. This Society has already publiſhed two volumes upon Miſcellaneous Subjects; in which are two Diſſertations relative to the ICELANDIC ANTIQUITIES.

II. He directed and enabled his Profeſſor of Botany, Dr. OEDER, to publiſh that magnificent work, the *Flora Danica*; of which he commanded preſents to be made to all the principal clergy, engaging them to contribute their aſſiſtance towards perfecting an undertaking ſo uſeful and extenſive: And, in order to promote the ſame deſign all over Europe, he commanded this work to be printed in the Latin and French, as well as German and Daniſh Languages; and to be carried on till it ſhall be found to contain the figures and deſcriptions of all the plants which grow within the limits of the polar circle, and the 53d degree of latitude.

III. He ſent the celebrated Miſſion of Literati to explore the interior parts of Arabia, and to give us a more perfect account of that now almoſt unknown country, which was once the ſeat of learning and ſcience: as alſo to collect whatever reliques could be found of the old Arabian books, hiſtory, &c. Theſe Miſſionaries were FIVE in number, viz. Mr. Profeſſor DE HAVEN, for Philoſophy and Language: Mr. Profeſſor FORSKAL (a Diſciple of Linnæus) for Natural Hiſtory; a lieutenant of engineers, Mr. NIEBUHR, for Geography and Aſtronomy: Dr. CRAMER, for Medicine, and Mr. PAURENFEIND for Drawing and taking Views, &c. The whole deſign and plan of their voyage may be ſeen in Monſ. MICHAELIS's "*Recueil des queſtions propoſées a une Societé de Savans, qui par ordre de ſa Maj. Dan. font le voyage de l'Arabie*, &c." Francf. 1763. 12mo. Of theſe FIVE Literati, only one is returned alive out of the Eaſt. Their joint obſervations, however, are in the hands of Mr. NIEBUHR the ſurvivor, which he is preparing for the preſs in the German Language. As ſome of the travellers died early in their tour, we muſt not expect to find the original plan entirely compleated. The work will be found moſt perfect in what relates to Geography and Natural Hiſtory: but though it muſt, from the circumſtances above mentioned, prove ſomewhat defective, the world may nevertheleſs form conſiderable expectations of it; and it will, as we are aſſured, be given to the Publ in the courſe of this preſent year, M,DCC,LXX.

THE FRENCH AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

IF it be allowed that the Hiſtory of a conſiderable people is in itſelf uſeful and intereſting, independent of all accidental circumſtances; it muſt alſo be acknowledged that there are certain points of time, when ſuch a Hiſtory runs a better chance of being received, than at any other. This is more particularly the caſe when a general curioſity is excited concerning the nation which is the ſubject of that hiſtory. An illuſtrious reign *, diſtinguiſhed by whatever can render it dear to a people, and glorious in the eyes of ſenſible obſervers, cannot attract the attention of mankind, without inſpiring at the ſame time, a deſire of knowing the principal events which have preceded that reign.

This reflection ſufficiently juſtifies my deſign of publiſhing a new Hiſtory of Denmark in the French Language. If I am fortunate enough to ſucceed in my undertaking, I ſhall be the more happy, as I ſhall, in many reſpects, anſwer the ends of my preſent employment, and ſhall give, at the ſame time, a proof of my gratitude to the Daniſh nation, who have ſo generouſly adopted me for their fellow-citizen.

* Our Author here (and below, p. lv.) pays a compliment to the late King of Denmark, FREDERICK V: with what reaſon ſee the preceding page

I am

I am not ignorant that many perſons have executed long ago, either in the whole or in part, a work of the ſame kind with mine; and I ſhall, in its proper place, do juſtice to their diligence *. But as the volume which I now offer to the public relates to a ſubject which theſe Authors have treated either very ſuperficially, or not at all; I ſhall here, in a few words, give my reaſons why, at ſetting out, I have followed a plan ſomewhat different from theirs.

To run curſorily over a number of events, unconnected and void of circumſtances, without being able to penetrate into their true cauſes; to ſee people, princes, conquerors and legiſlators ſucceed one another rapidly upon the ſtage, without knowing any thing of their real character, manner of thinking, or of the ſpirit which animated them, this is to have only the ſkeleton of Hiſtory; this is meerly to behold a parcel of dark and obſcure ſhadows, inſtead of living and converſing with real men. For this reaſon I have all along reſolved not to meddle with the body of the Daniſh Hiſtory, till I have preſented my Readers with a ſketch of the manners and genius of the firſt inhabitants of Denmark. But I imagined, like thoſe who have preceded me in this attempt, that a few pages would have ſufficed for illuſtrating the moſt eſſential of theſe points; nor was it, till I had examined this matter with new attention, that I diſcovered my miſtake. I then found, that too much brevity would defeat the end I propoſed, which was to place my ſubject in different points of view, all of them equally new and intereſting.

* Our Author probably alludes to a former hiſtory of Denmark in the French Language, (dedicated to the preſent King's grandfather, K. FREDERICK IV.) intitled, "*L'Hiſtoire de Dannemarc avant et depuis l'Etabliſſement de la Monarchie: Par Mr. J. B.* DES ROCHES, *Eſcuyer, Conſeiller et Avocat General du Roi Tr. Chr. au Bureau des Finances et Chambre du Domaine de la Generalité de la Rochelle.*" AMST. 1730. 6 Vol. 12mo. To this work is prefixed a PREFACE HISTORIQUE *pour ſervir d'Introduction a l'Hiſtoire de Dannemarc*; which contains a tolerable diſplay of the Northern Antiquities, &c.

In

In fact, History has not recorded the annals of a people who have occasioned greater, more sudden, or more numerous revolutions in Europe than the Scandinavians; or whose antiquities, at the same time, are so little known. Had, indeed, their emigrations been only like those sudden torrents of which all traces and remembrance are soon effaced, the indifference that has been shown to them would have been sufficiently justified by the barbarism they have been reproached with. But, during those general inundations, the face of Europe underwent so total a change; and during the confusion they occasioned, such different establishments took place; new societies were formed, animated so intirely with a new spirit, that the History of our own manners and institutions ought necessarily to ascend back, and even dwell a considerable time upon a period, which discovers to us their chief origin and source.

But I ought not barely to assert this. Permit me to support the assertion by proofs. For this purpose, let us briefly run over all the different Revolutions which this part of the world underwent, during the long course of ages which its History comprehends, in order to see what share the nations of the north have had in producing them. If we recur back to the remotest times, we observe a nation issuing step by step from the forests of Scythia, incessantly increasing and dividing to take possession of the uncultivated countries which it met with in its progress. Very soon after, we see the same people, like a tree full of vigour, extending long branches over all Europe; we see them also carrying with them, wherever they came, from the borders of the Black Sea, to the extremities of Spain, of Sicily, and Greece, a religion simple and martial as themselves, a form of government dictated by good sense and liberty, a restless unconquered spirit, apt to take fire at the very mention of subjection and constraint, and a ferocious courage, nourished by a savage and vagabond life. While the gentleness of the climate softened imperceptibly

tibly the ferocity of thoſe who ſettled in the ſouth. Colonies of Egyptians and Phenicians mixing with them upon the coaſts of Greece, and thence paſſing over to thoſe of Italy, taught them at laſt to live in cities, to cultivate letters, arts and commerce. Thus their opinions, their cuſtoms and genius, were blended together, and new ſtates were formed upon new plans. Rome, in the mean time, aroſe, and at length carried all before her. In proportion as ſhe increaſed in grandeur, ſhe forgot her ancient manners, and deſtroyed, among the nations whom ſhe overpowered, the original ſpirit with which they were animated. But this ſpirit continued unaltered in the colder countries of Europe, and maintained itſelf there like the independency of the inhabitants. Scarce could fifteen or ſixteen centuries produce there any change in that ſpirit. There it renewed itſelf inceſſantly; for, during the whole of that long interval, new adventurers iſſuing continually from the original inexhauſtible country, trod upon the heels of their fathers towards the north, and, being in their turn ſucceeded by new troops of followers, they puſhed one another forward, like the waves of the ſea. The northern countries, thus overſtocked, and unable any longer to contain ſuch reſtleſs inhabitants, equally greedy of glory and plunder, diſcharged at length, upon the Roman Empire, the weight that oppreſſed them. The barriers of the Empire, ill defended by a people whom proſperity had enervated, were borne down on all ſides by torrents of victorious armies. We then ſee the conquerors introducing, among the nations they vanquiſhed, viz. into the very boſom of ſlavery and ſloth, that ſpirit of independance and equality, that elevation of ſoul, that taſte for rural and military life, which both the one and the other had originally derived from the ſame common ſource, but which were then among the Romans breathing their laſt. Diſpoſitions and principles ſo oppoſite, ſtruggled long with forces ſufficiently equal, but they united in the end, they coaleſced together, and from their coalition

lition ſprung thoſe principles and that ſpirit which governed, afterwards, almoſt all the ſtates of Europe, and which, notwithſtanding the differences of climate, of religion and particular accidents, do ſtill viſibly reign in them, and retain, to this day, more or leſs the traces of their firſt common original.

It is eaſy to ſee, from this ſhort ſketch, how greatly the nations of the north have influenced the different fates of Europe: And, if it be worth while to trace its revolutions to their cauſes, if the illuſtration of its inſtitutions, of its police, of its cuſtoms, of its manners, of its laws, be a ſubject of uſeful and intereſting inquiry; it muſt be allowed, that the Antiquities of the north, that is to ſay, every thing which tends to make us acquainted with its ancient inhabitants, merits a ſhare in the attention of thinking men. But to render this obvious by a particular example; Is it not well known that the moſt flouriſhing and celebrated ſtates of Europe owe originally to the northern nations, whatever liberty they now enjoy, either in their conſtitution, or in the ſpirit of their government? For although the Gothic form of government has been almoſt every where altered or aboliſhed, have we not retained, in moſt things, the opinions, the cuſtoms, the manners which that government had a tendency to produce? Is not this, in fact, the principal ſource of that courage, of that averſion to ſlavery, of that empire of honour which characteriſe in general the European nations; and of that moderation, of that eaſineſs of acceſs, and peculiar attention to the rights of humanity, which ſo happily diſtinguiſh our ſovereigns from the inacceſſible and ſuperb tyrants of Aſia? The immenſe extent of the Roman Empire had rendered its conſtitution ſo deſpotic and military, many of its Emperors were ſuch ferocious monſters, its ſenate was become ſo mean-ſpirited and vile, that all elevation of ſentiment, every thing that was noble and manly, ſeems to have been for ever baniſhed from their hearts and minds: Inſomuch, that if all Europe had received the yoke of

Rome

Rome in this her ſtate of debaſement, this fine part of the world, reduced to the inglorious condition of the reſt, could not have avoided falling into that kind of barbarity, which is of all others the moſt incurable; as, by making as many ſlaves as there are men, it degrades them ſo low as not to leave them even a thought or deſire of bettering their condition. But Nature had long prepared a remedy for ſuch great evils, in that unſubmiting, unconquerable ſpirit, with which ſhe had inſpired the people of the north; and thus ſhe made amends to the human race, for all the calamities which, in other reſpects, the inroads of theſe nations, and the overthrow of the Roman Empire produced.

"The great prerogative of Scandinavia, (ſays the "admirable Author of the Spirit of Laws) and what "ought to recommend its inhabitants beyond every "people upon earth, is, that they afforded the great "reſource to the liberty of Europe, that is, to almoſt "all the liberty that is among men. The Goth "JORNANDES, (adds he) calls the north of Europe "THE FORGE OF MANKIND. I ſhould rather "call it, the forge of thoſe inſtruments which broke "the fetters manufactured in the ſouth. It was "there thoſe valiant nations were bred, who left "their native climes to deſtroy tyrants and ſlaves, "and to teach men that nature having made them "equal, no reaſon could be aſſigned for their becoming dependent, but their mutual happineſs."

If theſe conſiderations be of any weight, I ſhall eaſily be excuſed for having treated at ſo much length, the Antiquities of the nation whoſe Hiſtory I write. The judicious public will ſee and decide, whether I have conceived a juſt idea of my ſubject, or whether, from an illuſion too common with Authors, I have not aſcribed to it more importance than it deſerves. I ſhould not be without ſome apprehenſions of this kind, if that were always true which is commonly ſaid, that we grow fond of our labours in proportion as they are difficult. Many tedious and unentertaining

ing volumes I have been obliged to peruſe: I have had more than one language to learn: My materials were widely ſcattered, ill digeſted, and often little known: It was not eaſy to collect them, or to accommodate them to my purpoſe. Theſe are all circumſtances, ill calculated, it muſt be owned, to give me much aſſurance. But I have likewiſe met with very conſiderable aſſiſtances; ſeveral learned men have treated particular points of the Antiquities of the north, with that deep erudition which characteriſes the ſtudies of the laſt age. I cannot mention, without acknowledgment and praiſe, BARTHOLINUS, WORMIUS, STEPHANIUS, ARNGRIM JONAS, TORFÆUS, &c. I have alſo conſulted, with advantage, two learned ſtrangers, Meſſ. PELLOUTIER and DALIN. The firſt, in his Hiſtory of the Celtes, has thrown a great deal of light upon the religion of the firſt inhabitants of Europe. The ſecond has given a new Hiſtory of Sweden, which diſcovers extenſive reading and genius. In three or four chapters, where the Author treats of the religion, the laws and manners of the ancient Swedes, we find theſe ſubjects diſcuſſed with unuſual perſpicuity and elegance.

There are people of that happy genius, that they need only wiſh in order to ſucceed, and have every reſource within themſelves. As for me, I dare hardly reckon among my advantages, the ſtrong motives and inducements I have had to my undertaking. I dare not tell ſtrangers, that I have had the happineſs of being encouraged by more than one Mæcenas, and by a Prince, alike knowing, and zealous in the advancement of knowledge. They would judge of me, unqueſtionably, according to what ſuch numerous and great encouragements ought to have produced, when, perhaps, I hardly find myſelf capable of diſcharging the duties which lie upon me in common with all Hiſtorians.

Is it neceſſary that I ſhould take notice, before I conclude, that I am about to delineate a nation in its infancy, and that the greateſt part of the other Europeans

peans were neither leſs ſavage, nor leſs uncivilized, during the ſame period? I ſhall give ſufficient proofs of this in other places, being perſuaded that there is among nations an emulation of glory, which often degenerates into jealouſy, and puts them upon aſſuming a pre-eminence upon the moſt chimerical advantages: That there glows in their boſoms a patriotic zeal, which is often ſo blind and ill informed, as to take alarm at the moſt ſlender and indifferent declarations made in favour of others.

In the ſecond Volume will be found a Tranſlation of the EDDA, and of ſome other fragments of Mythology and ancient pieces of Poetry. They are ſingular, and, in many reſpects, precious monuments, which throw much light upon the Antiquities of the north, and upon thoſe of the other 'Gothic *' nations. They will ſerve for Proofs, and be a Supplement to this Deſcription of the Manners of the Ancient Danes; and for this reaſon, as well as out of deference to the advice of ſome perſons of taſte, I was induced to tranſlate them, and to annex them to it.

* *Celtes.* Orig.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE MANNERS, CUSTOMS, &c. OF THE ANCIENT DANES

And other NORTHERN NATIONS.

CHAPTER I.

Denmark deſcribed, and the ſeveral countries ſubject to its crown, viz. Norway, Iceland, Greenland.

THE ſeveral countries, which compoſe the Daniſh monarchy, have ſeldom juſtice done them by the other nations of Europe. The notions entertained of them are not commonly the moſt favourable or true. This is owing to various cauſes. The ſituation of ſome of the provinces is ſo remote, that ſkilful travellers have ſeldom had occaſion to viſit them; Thoſe who have pretended to de-

ſcribe them have been generally wanting in fidelity or exactneſs; Some of their deſcriptions are grown obſolete, ſo that what was once true, is no longer ſo at preſent; Laſtly, ſuch confuſion and prejudices have been occaſioned by that vague term THE NORTH, that we are not to wonder if Denmark has been thought ſlightly of by the ſouthern nations. To correct theſe miſtakes I ſhall lay before the Reader a faithful account of the preſent ſtate of theſe countries: In which I ſhall be more or leſs diffuſe in proportion as they are more or leſs known to foreigners, for whom this work is principally deſigned. And if the picture I draw, preſents nothing very agreeable or ſtriking, I dare at leaſt promiſe that it ſhall be very exact and faithful.

DENMARK is naturally divided into continent, and iſlands. Among the iſlands, the firſt that merits attention, as well on account of its ſize as fertility, is ZEALAND. In this iſle is ſeated COPENHAGEN, the capital of the whole kingdom; which derives its name from its harbour *, one of the fineſt in the world. This city is built

* It's name in the Daniſh language is KIOBENHAFFN; which literally is a "Haven for merchandize or traffic;" from KIOBE, *Mercari*, and HAFFN, *Portus*. This city has been reckoned by travellers to be about the ſize of Briſtol. T.

upon the very edge of that channel, ſo well known by the name of the SOUND, and receives into its boſom a ſmall arm of the ſea, which divides Zealand from another iſle of leſs extent, but of very agreeable ſituation, named AMAC. Copenhagen, which is at preſent very ſtrong, wealthy, and populous, hath continually improved in its dimenſions and beauty ever ſince king Chriſtopher of Bavaria fixed his reſidence there in the year 1443: but it owes its greateſt ſplendor to the laſt reign, and that of the preſent king Frederic V. in which it hath been adorned with a palace worthy of the monarch who inhabits it, and with many ſtately buildings, as well public as private.

At ſome leagues diſtance towards the north, this channel, which waſhes the walls of Copenhagen, grows gradually narrower, being confined between the two oppoſite coaſts of Zealand and Schonen, till it forms at length what is properly called the Paſſage of the Sound; one of the moſt celebrated and moſt frequented ſtraits in the world; and which opens the principal communication between the ocean and the Baltic. ELSENORE, which is ſituated on the brink of the Sound, and defended by the fortreſs of CRONENBERG, enjoys the ever-moving picture of a multitude of ſhips, which paſs and repaſs, and come to

pay their tribute to the king *. About a league diſtant the oppoſite ſhore terminates the proſpect in a very agreeable manner; and not far off, between the two banks, riſes the little iſle of WEME, famous for the obſervations of Tycho Brahe. Although the other parts of Zealand afford nothing ſo ſtriking as this; the eye will find enough to entertain it every where elſe. Here are vaſt plains covered with a moſt delightful verdure, which ſprings earlier and continues longer than the ſouthern nations would imagine. Theſe plains are interſperſed with little hills, lakes, and groves; and adorned with ſeveral palaces, many gentlemens ſeats †, and a good number of cities and towns. The ſoil, though light and ſomewhat ſandy, produces a great quantity of grain, particularly of oats and barley: nor is it deficient in woods and paſtures. Beſides, the ſea and lakes furniſh this iſland with fiſh in ſuch abundance, as might well ſupply the want of the other fruits of the earth in a country leſs fertile or leſs addicted to commerce.

But fertility is in a ſtill more eminent degree the character of FUNEN, which is the ſecond of the Daniſh iſles in point of ſize,

* A certain toll paid by the merchant-ſhips for paſſing the Sound. T.

† In French, *Châteaux*.

but the firſt in goodneſs of ſoil. This iſland riſes higher than that of Zealand, and is ſeparated from it by an arm of the ſea, which, on account of its breadth, is called the GREAT BELT, to diſtinguiſh it from another ſmaller channel, that divides it from Jutland, and is called the LESSER BELT. Corn, paſture, and fruits grow plentifully in this iſland, which preſents the moſt delightful appearance. In the middle of a vaſt plain ſtands ODENSEE, the capital of the province; and ſeven towns leſs conſiderable adorn the ſea-coaſts at almoſt equal diſtances.

The iſles of LALAND and FALSTRIA yield not much in point of fertility to Funen, being both of them famous for their fine wheat: but the latter of theſe produces alſo fruits in ſuch abundance, that one may juſtly call it the Orchard of Denmark. Amidſt the multitude of leſſer iſlands, that are ſcattered round the principal ones, there are few which do not ſupply their inhabitants with neceſſaries, and even afford them an overplus for traffic. LANGLAND hath plenty of fine corn-fields. BORNHOLM, MONA, and SAMSOE have excellent paſtures. AMAC is found very proper for pulſe, and is become a fruitful garden under the hands of thoſe induſtrious Flemings, who were brought hither by queen Elizabeth,

wife of Chriſtian II. and ſiſter of Charles V.

If we paſs over to the provinces on the continent, we ſhall find new reaſons to convince us, that Denmark plentifully ſupports its inhabitants, and is able to enrich even a numerous people. JUTLAND, the largeſt of theſe provinces, forms the head of that long peninſula, which is bounded by the ocean to the weſt, by the gulph of Categade and the Baltic to the eaſt, and which opens a communication into Germany towards the ſouth. From this province they carry into Norway a great part of the corn uſed in that kingdom; and hence are exported thoſe thouſands of head of cattle, which are every year brought into Holland and other countries. Here are alſo bred thoſe Daniſh horſes, whoſe beauty makes them ſo much ſought after in all parts of Europe. If the inland parts are barren in ſome places, the coaſts extremely abound with fiſh. This affords a reſource ſo much the greater, as they increaſe and breed in the long bays, which run up into the country, in ſuch a manner that almoſt all the inhabitants enjoy the benefit of the fiſhery. The gulph of LIMFIORDE in particular reaches almoſt from one ſea to the other; and the fiſhing therein is ſo rich, that, after

it has ſupplied the wants of the province, it conſtantly produces large quantities for exportation *.

Nature hath been no leſs indulgent to the ſouthern part of this peninſula, which forms the dutchy of SLESWIC. Although the inland parts of this country have large tracts of heath and barren fields, yet the fertility of its coaſts, its advantageous ſituation between the ocean and the Baltic, the number and convenience of its harbours, and the large traffic which it carries on, have enriched many of its cities, and rendered it an agreeable and flouriſhing province †.

What I have ſaid of the dutchy of Sleſwic is pretty nearly applicable to the dutchy of HOLSTEIN. This province is in general rich, fertile, and populous ‡. Fat

* "The principal cities of Jutland are ALBURG, NYCOPPING, WYBURG, AARHUSEN, RANDERS, HORSENS, WARDE, RIBE, FREDERICIA, COLDING, &c." *Firſt Edit.*

† "SLESWIC, an ancient and conſiderable city, is the capital of the dutchy. FLENSBURG hath an extenſive commerce. FREDERICKSTADT, TONDEREN, and TONNINGEN, are cities of tolerable ſize." *Firſt Edit.*

‡ Lord Moleſworth obſerves, that this country very much reſembles ENGLAND. Another traveller has remarked, that the inhabitants are in their perſons very like the ENGLISH. See "Howell's Letters," vol. i. ſect. 6. lett. 4. It ſeems this writer was at Rendſburg (or as he calls it Rainſburg) when the king

and plentiful paſtures; large and trading cities ſituate near together; coaſts abounding in fiſh, and a large river* which terminates the province towards the ſouth, form its principal advantages †.

On the other ſide of the Elb, after croſſing the country of Bremen, we find two ſmall provinces, which have been long united to the crown of Denmark. Theſe are the counties of OLDENBURG and DELMENHORST, which are comprized within

king of Denmark held an aſſembly of the ſtates there in 1632. "Among other "things, he ſays, I put "myſelf to mark the car- "riage of the Holſtein "gentlemen, as they were "going in and out at the "parliament-houſe: and "obſerving well their phy- "ſiognomies, their com- "plections, and gait; I "thought verily I was in "England; for they re- "ſemble the Engliſh more "than either Welſh or "Scot (though cohabiting "upon the ſame iſland) "or any other people that "ever I ſaw yet; which "makes me verily believe, "that the Engliſh nation "came firſt from this "lower circle of Saxony; "and there is one thing "that ſtrengtheneth me "in this belief; that there "is an ancient town hard "by, called Lunden, and "an iſland called Angles; "whence it may well be "that our country came "from Britannia to be "Anglia." This remark is confirmed by the moſt diligent inquirers into this ſubject, who place the country of our Saxon anceſtors in the Cimbric Cherſoneſe, in the tracts of land ſince known by the names of Jutland, Angelen, and Holſtein. T.

* The Elb.

† "The king of Den- "mark poſſeſſes here "RENDSBURG, a very "ſtrong place, ALTONA, "a town of great trade, "and GLUCKERSTADT, "a good fortification."

First Edit.

the

the circle of Weſtphalia, and have received their names from their two principal cities.

The temperature of the air is nearly the ſame in the greateſt part of theſe provinces, and, except in the north of Jutland, is much milder than their ſituation would incline one to believe, being rarely ſubject to very long or rigorous cold. To comprehend this, it will be ſufficient to remind the reader, of this general obſervation, that countries ſurrounded with the ſea, have their atmoſphere loaded with vapours continually exhaling from it, which break and blunt the nitrous particles of the air, and ſoften its rigours. When the ſtraits and gulphs, which ſurround the Daniſh iſlands, become frozen in very ſharp winters, it is leſs owing to the prevalence of the froſt there, than to the large flakes of ice, which are driven by the winds out of the northern ſeas, and are there aſſembled and united. The ſummer ſeaſon commonly begins with the month of May, and continues till October: and during its continuance, the beauty of the country, the freſhneſs and ſhortneſs of the nights, and the convenience of navigation in a country ſurrounded and croſſed by the ſea, eaſily repair and make the inhabitants forget the languors and interruptions, which winter cauſes in their buſineſs and amuſements.

If travellers for the moſt part have not been very favourable in their accounts of Denmark, they have been ſtill leſs tender of NORWAY. They have often confounded it with Lapland, and have given deſcriptions of its inhabitants, and their manners, which are hardly applicable to the ſavages of that country. The notion that is generally entertained of the extreme coldneſs of the climate here is no leſs unjuſt. It is true, that in a kingdom which extends thirteen degrees from north to ſouth, the temperature of the air cannot every where be the ſame: accordingly the moſt northern parts of Norway, thoſe which face the eaſt, and which are not ſheltered by the mountains from the fury of the north winds, are undoubtedly expoſed to rigorous winters. But almoſt all that length of coaſt, which is waſhed by the ſea towards the weſt, and which forms ſo conſiderable a part of Norway, commonly enjoys an air tolerably temperate, even in the middle of winter. Here are none of thoſe "deſolate regions, where "Winter hath eſtabliſhed his eternal em-"pire, and where he reigns among horrid "heaps of ice and ſnow," as ignorance hath often led travellers, and a fondneſs for the marvellous induced poets to ſpeak of Norway. It is ſeldom that a very ſharp froſt laſts there a fortnight or three weeks together;

together; it rains frequently at BERGEN in the midſt of winter*, and the ports of Hamburg, Lubeck, and Amſterdam, are locked up with froſt ten times for once that this city is ſo expoſed. In ſhort, this is an accident that doth not happen more than two or three times in an age. The vapours, which riſe from the ocean, continually ſoften the ſharpneſs of the cold; and it is only in the coaſts of Iceland, Finmark, and Greenland, that are found thoſe immenſe and eternal banks of ice, of which voyagers make ſuch a noiſe, and which, when they are ſevered, may ſometimes float along the coaſts of Norway.

The greateſt inconvenience to which this vaſt country is expoſed, ariſes without diſpute, from the inequality of the ground, from it's being almoſt entirely covered with rocks and ſtones, and croſt every way by high and large mountains, which render a great part of it wild and deſert. There grow, notwithſtanding, ſeveral ſorts of grain in many of the provinces, as in the UPLANDS, the RYFOLKE, JEDEREN †; the reſt which have not this advantage may eaſily be ſupplied from Jutland or the Daniſh iſlands, by means of the navigation. Various

* See PONTOPPIDAN's natural hiſtory of Norway, vol. i.

† HOLBERG's Danm. og. Norg. Beſkrivelſe. [i. e. Deſcription of Denmark and Norway.] p. 36. & ſeqq.

products, with which this country abounds, ſufficiently compenſate for that diſadvantage.

The other nations of Europe cannot be ignorant that great part of the pitch and tar, of the maſts, planks, and different ſorts of timber, which are every where uſed, come from Norway. Theſe articles alone would be ſufficient to procure an eaſy competence for the inhabitants of the inland and eaſtern parts of this country. The weſtern coaſt hath a reſource not leſs rich or leſs certain, in the prodigious abundance of its fiſh. Cod, ſalmon and herrings are no where found in greater quantities. The Norwegians ſupply part of Europe with theſe; and this fruitful branch of commerce becomes every day more extenſive by the care of a wiſe adminiſtration. The very mountains of this country, which at firſt ſight, appear ſo barren, often conceal great riches in their boſoms. Some of them are intire quarries of fine marble, which the luxury of all the cities of Europe could never exhauſt. In others are found jaſper, cryſtal and ſome precious ſtones; ſeveral mines of gold, though hitherto not very rich; two mines of ſilver by no means ſcanty; much copper; but above all ſo great a quantity of iron, that this ſingle article brings almoſt as much money into the kingdom, as what ariſes from the ſale of its timber.

At

At the northern extremity of this kingdom and of Europe, dwells a people, which, from the earlieſt ages, have differed from the other inhabitants of Scandinavia, in figure, manners, and language. This nation, known by the name of FINNS, or LAPLANDERS, not only poſſeſs the northern parts of Norway, but alſo vaſt countries in Muſcovy and Sweden. They are a coarſe and ſavage race of men, yet by no means barbarous, if we underſtand by this word miſchievous and cruel. Such of them as live upon the ſea-coaſts ſupport themſelves by fiſhing, and by a traffic they carry on with a ſort of little barks, which they make and ſell to the Norwegians. The reſt wander up and down in the mountains without any fixed habitation, and gain a ſcanty ſubſiſtence by hunting, by their pelteries, and their rain-deer. Such of them as are neighbours to the Norwegians have embraced chriſtianity, and are ſomewhat civilized by their commerce with that people. The reſt live ſtill in ignorance, not knowing ſo much as the names of the other nations of the world; preſerved by their poverty and their climate from the evils which diſturb the enjoyments of more opulent countries. Their whole religion conſiſts in ſome confuſed notions of an inviſible and tremendous being: and a few ſuperſtitious ceremonies compoſe their worſhip. They have no laws, and

ſcarce any magiſtrates: yet have they great humanity, a natural ſoftneſs of diſpoſition, and a very hoſpitable temper.

They were nearly the ſame in the time of Tacitus. "The FINNS *," he ſays, "live in extreme ſavageneſs, in ſquallid "poverty: have neither arms, nor ſteeds, "nor houſes. Herbs are their food, ſkins "their cloathing, the earth their bed. All "their reſource is their arrows, which "they point with fiſh-bones, for want of "iron. Their women live by hunting, "as well as the men †. For they every "where accompany them, and gain their "ſhare of the prey. A rude hovel ſhelters "their infants from the inclemencies of "the weather, and the beaſts of prey. "Such is the home to which their young "men return; the aſylum to which the "old retire. This kind of life they think "more happy, than the painful toils of "agriculture, than the various labours of "domeſtic management, than that circle "of hopes and fears, in which men are "involved by their attention to the fortune "of themſelves and others. Equally ſe-"cure both as to gods and men, the Finns

* FENNI. TACIT. De morib. Germ. ad fin.

† This ſeems to contradict the paſſage above, that herbs are their food: I ſuppoſe herbs were their ordinary food; fleſh gained by hunting their regale.

"have

" have attained that rare privilege, not to " form a ſingle wiſh."

I ought not to ſeparate ICELAND from Norway. This iſland, the largeſt in Europe next to Great Britain, is ſurrounded by that part of the northern ſea, which geographers have been pleaſed to call the Deucalidonian ocean. Its length from eaſt to weſt is about 112 Daniſh miles (12 to a degree) and its mean breadth may be 50 of thoſe miles ‡. Nature itſelf hath marked out the diviſion of this country *. Two long chains of mountains run from the middle of the eaſtern and weſtern coaſts, riſing by degrees till they meet in the center of the iſland: from whence two other chains of ſmaller hills gradually deſcend till they reach the coaſts that lie north and ſouth; thus making a primary diviſion of the country into four quarters *(fierdingers)* which are diſtinguiſhed by the four points of the compaſs towards which they lie.

The whole iſland can only be conſidered as one vaſt mountain, interſperſed with long and deep vallies, concealing in its boſom heaps of minerals, of vitrified and bituminous ſubſtances, and riſing on all ſides out of the ocean in the form of a ſhort blunted cone †.

‡ About 560 Engliſh miles long, and 250 broad. T.

* EGERH. OLAI Enarrat. Hiſtor. de Iſland. p. 18. § 6.

† Vid. HORREBOW's Natural Hiſtory of Iceland, paſſim.

Earthquakes and volcanoes have thro' all ages laid waſte this unhappy iſland. Hecla, the only one of theſe volcanoes, which is known by name to the reſt of Europe, ſeems at preſent extinct; but the principles of fire, which lie concealed all over the iſland, often break out in other places. There have been already within this century many eruptions, as dreadful, as they were unexpected. From the boſom of theſe enormous heaps of ice we have lately ſeen aſcend torrents of ſmoke, of flame, and melted or calcined ſubſtances, which ſpread fire and inundation wide over the neighbouring fields, whilſt they filled the air with thick clouds, and hideous roarings cauſed by the melting of ſuch immenſe quantities of ſnow and ice. One meets almoſt every where in travelling through this country with marks of the ſame confuſion and diſorder. One ſees enormous piles of ſharp and broken rocks, which are ſometimes porous and half calcined, and often frightful on account of their blackneſs, and the traces of fire, which they ſtill retain. The clefts and hollows of the rocks are only filled with thoſe hideous and barren ruins; but in the valleys, which are formed between the mountains, and which are ſcattered here and there all over the iſland very often at a conſiderable diſtance from each other, are found very extenſive and delightful plains,

where

where nature, who always mingles ſome allay with the rigour of her ſeverities, affords a tolerable aſylum for men who know no better, and a moſt plentiful and delicate nouriſhment for cattle.

I ought to beſtow a word or two upon another northern country dependent on the kingdom of Norway, as well as Iceland, but much more extenſive, more unknown, and more ſavage: I mean GREENLAND, a vaſt country, which one knows not whether to call an iſland or continent. It extends from the 60th to the 80th degree of latitude; farther than that men have not penetrated. All that we can know for certain of it is, that this country, little known to geographers, ſtretches away from its ſouthern point, named Cape Farewel, continually widening both towards the eaſt and weſt. The eaſtern coaſt in ſome places is not diſtant more than 40 miles from Iceland, but the ice, which ſurrounds it, or other unknown cauſes, make it now paſs for inacceſſable. Yet it was chiefly on this coaſt, that the Norwegians formerly eſtabliſhed a colony, as we ſhall ſhow hereafter: a colony which at this time is either deſtroyed, or perhaps only neglected, and cut off from all communication with the reſt of the world. With regard to the weſtern coaſt, which alone is frequented by

the Danes at preſent; it is known no farther than the 70th degree. It is very probable that on this ſide, Greenland joins to the continent of America. Yet no one hath hitherto reached the bottom of the Bay, or Straits of Davies. The Savages whom the Danes have found on this coaſt, are not unlike the Laplanders in figure, yet ſpeak a language quite different from theirs. They are ſhort of ſtature, and thick-ſet, their viſage is broad and tawny, their lips are thick, and their hair black and coarſe. They are robuſt, phlegmatic, incurious, and even ſtupid when their own intereſt is not immediately concerned. Yet their children have been found capable of the ſame inſtructions, as thoſe of Europeans. They live without laws, and without ſuperiors, yet with great union and tranquility. They are neither quarrelſome, nor miſchievous, nor warlike; being greatly afraid of thoſe that are: and they keep fair with the Europeans from this motive. Theft, blows and murder are almoſt unknown to them. They are chaſte before marriage, and love their children tenderly. Their naſtineſs is ſo great, that it renders their hoſpitality almoſt uſeleſs to Europeans; and their ſimplicity hath not been able to preſerve them from having prieſts, who paſs among them for enchanters, and

are

are in truth very great and dexterous cheats. As to their religion it consists in the belief of certain good and evil Genii, and of a Land of Souls, to which, however, they pay little or no regard in their actions.

CHAPTER II.

Of the firſt Inhabitants of Denmark, and particularly of the Cimbri.

IT is uſeleſs to enquire at what period of time Denmark began to be inhabited. Such a reſearch would doubtleſs lead us up to an age when all Europe was plunged in ignorance and barbarity. Theſe two words include in them almoſt all we know of the hiſtory of the firſt ages. It is very probable, that the firſt Danes were like all the other Teutonic nations, a colony of Scythians, who ſpread themſelves at different times over the countries which lay towards the weſt. The reſemblance of name might induce us to believe that it was from among the Cimmerian Scythians (whom the ancients placed to the north of the Euxine ſea) that the firſt colonies were ſent into Denmark; and that from this people they inherited the name of Cimbri, which they bare ſo long before they

they aſſumed that of Danes *. But this reſemblance of name, which many hiſtorians produce as a ſolid proof, is liable to ſo many different explanations, that it is better to acknowledge once for all, that this ſubject is as incapable of certainty, as it is unworthy of reſearch.

Whatever was the origin of the Cimbri, they for a long time before the birth of Chriſt inhabited the country, which received from them the name of the Cimbrica Cherſoneſus †, and probably comprehended Jutland, Sleſwic, and Holſtein, and perhaps ſome of the neighbouring provinces. The ancients conſidered this people as a branch of the Germans, and never diſtinguiſhed the one from the other in the deſcriptions they have left us of the manners and cuſtoms of that nation. The hiſtorical monuments of the north give us ſtill leſs information about them, and go no farther back than the arrival of Odin; the epoque of which, I am

* The hiſtorians of the north do not inform us when this name began to be in uſe. Among foreign writers, PROCOPIUS an author of the VIth century, is the firſt who appears to have made uſe of it. We ſhall ſee below, what we are to think of the etymologies which have been given of this name.

† Or Cimbric Peninſula.

inclined to place, with the celebrated Torfæus, about 70 years before the birth of Chriſt. All that paſſed in Denmark before that period would be intirely unknown to us, if the famous expedition of the Cimbri into Italy had not drawn upon them the attention of a people who enjoyed the advantage of having hiſtorians. It is a ſingle gleam, which for a moment throws light upon the ages of obſcurity: ſhort and tranſient as it is, let us nevertheleſs catch it, in order to diſcover, if poſſible, a feature or two of the character of this people.

The hiſtory of Rome § informs us, that in the conſulſhip of Caecilius Metellus and Papirius Carbo, about one hundred and eleven years before the Chriſtian æra ‡, the republic was agitated by inteſtine diviſions which already began to threaten it's liberty, when the intrigues of the ſeveral factions were all at once ſuſpended by the ſudden news of an irruption of Barbarians. More than three hundred thouſand men, known by the name of Cimbri and Teutones, who chiefly iſſued from the Cimbric Cherſoneſe and the neighbouring iſlands, had forſaken their country to go in ſearch of a more fa-

§ See PLUTARCH in Mario. — OROS. l. 5. — Vel. PATERCUL. l. 2. — T. LIV. epit. l. 68. — Flor. l. 3. c. 30.

‡ Anno Urb. cond. 640.

vourable

vourable climate, of plunder and glory. They attacked and ſubdued at once whatever people they found in their paſſage, and as they met with no reſiſtance, reſolved to puſh their conqueſts farther. The Gauls were overwhelmed with this torrent, whoſe courſe was for a long time marked by the moſt horrible deſolation. Terror every where went before them, and when it was reported at Rome, that they were diſpoſed to paſs into Italy, the conſternation there became general. The ſenate diſpatched Papirius Carbo with an army to guard the paſſage of the Alps, deeming it a ſufficient degree of good fortune, if they could but preſerve Italy from theſe formidable gueſts. But, as they took a different rout, and ſtopped ſome time on the banks of the Danube, the Romans reſumed courage, and condemning their former fears, ſent in a menacing tone to the Cimbri, to bid them take care not to diſturb the Norici their allies. At the ſame time, the Cimbri being informed that a Roman army approached them, and reſpecting the character of the Republic, ſent ambaſſadors to the Conſul Papirius, "to excuſe themſelves, foraſmuch as having come from the remote "parts of the north, they could not poſſibly know that the Norici were the "allies of the Romans:" adding; "that

" they only knew it to be a received law
" among all nations, that the conqueror
" hath a right to whatever he can acquire:
" and that the Romans themſelves had no
" other pretenſions to moſt of the countries
" they had ſubdued, than what was found-
" ed on the ſword. That they had how-
" ever, a great veneration for the Roman
" people, on account of their virtue and
" bravery; in conſideration of which, al-
" though they knew not what it was to
" fear, they conſented to leave the Norici
" in peace, and to employ their valour in
" ſome other quarter, where they could do
" it without incurring the diſpleaſure of
" the common-wealth." Satisfied with ſo moderate an anſwer, the conſul ſuffered them quietly to remove; but when the Cimbri were retired into Dalmatia, and expected nothing leſs than hoſtilities from the Romans: a party of theſe commanded by Carbo, ſurprized them by night, aſleep and unarmed. Theſe brave warriors full of indignation, flew to their arms, and defended themſelves with ſo much intrepidity, that they wreſted the victory out of their enemies hands, and forced them to ſeek their ſafety by flight. But although the Romans almoſt all eſcaped the vengeance of their enemies, this defeat was not the leſs fatal to the republic; for the ſplendour

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and reputation which it added to the arms of the Cimbri, drew on all ſides under their banners ſuch nations as were either impatient of the Roman yoke, or jealous of their incroachments: particularly the Tigurini and Ambrones, two people originally of Helvetia. With theſe new auxiliaries, they overwhelmed Gaul a ſecond time, and advancing to the foot of the Pyrenees, endeavoured to eſtabliſh themſelves in Spain: but meeting with a vigorous repulſe from the Celtiberians, and tired of ſo many unprofitable invaſions, they ſent a new embaſſy to the Romans, to offer them their ſervices, upon condition they would give them lands to cultivate. The Senate too prudent to enter into any kind of accommodation with ſuch dangerous enemies, and already divided among themſelves about the diſtribution of lands, returned a direct refuſal to their demand. Upon which the Cimbri reſolved to ſeize by force what they could not gain by intreaty, and immediately fell with ſo much fury upon the new conſul Silanus, who had received orders to march againſt them, that they forced his intrenchments, pillaged his camp, and cut all his army in pieces. This victory was ſoon after followed by another, which their allies the Ambrones gained over Caſſius Longinus at the mouth of the Rhone; and

to compleat the misfortune, a third army of Romans more conſiderable than the two former, was ſoon after entirely defeated. Scaurus, who commanded it, was made priſoner, and afterwards put to death; his two ſons were ſlain, and more than fourſcore thouſand of the Romans and their allies were left dead in the field. Laſt of all, two other generals, the conſul Manlius, and the proconſul Caepio, to whom had been intruſted a fourth army already half vanquiſhed with fear, and who were diſunited and jealous of each other, were attacked near the Rhone, each of them in his camp, and entirely defeated.

Such repeated loſſes filled Rome with grief and terror; and many began to deſpair even of the ſafety of the ſtate. In this melancholy conjuncture, minds leſs firm than thoſe of theſe ſpirited Republicans, would doubtleſs, have ſuggeſted the imprudent meaſure of granting to the conquerors conditions capable of ſoftening them: they would have given them at once the lands they had required, or perhaps have purchaſed their friendſhip with a ſum of money. This dangerous policy would probably have ruined Rome in this exigence, as it did ſome ages after. The Gauls, the Germans, and the Scythians, poor and greedy nations, who gaſped after nothing

nothing but ſlaughter and booty, roving and warlike as well by inclination as neceſſity, would have haraſſed by continual inroads, a people which had let them ſee that they were at once richer and weaker than themſelves. The prudent firmneſs of the Senate, and the valour of Marius ſaved Rome for this time from the danger under which it afterwards ſunk. All the citizens now turned their eyes towards the conqueror of Jugurtha, as their laſt and only ſupport. They decreed him conſular honours for the fourth time, and aſſociated with him Catulus Luctatius, a perſon ſcarcely inferior to him in military ſkill, and who far excelled him in all the other qualities, which make a great ſtateſman.

Marius having quickly diſcovered that the ill ſucceſs of his predeceſſors was the effect of their imprudence, formed to himſelf a very different plan of conduct. In particular, he reſolved not to join battle with the enemy, till their furious ardour was abated, and till his ſoldiers familiarized to the ſight of them, ſhould no longer conſider themſelves as conquered before they came to blows. Their former victories, their tallneſs of ſtature, rendered ſtill more terrible by their dreſs, their ferocious air, their barbarous ſhouts, and unuſual manner of fighting, had all contributed to

ſtrike the Romans with the greateſt terror; and this terror was the firſt enemy he had to encounter; an enemy which time alone could ſubdue. With this view, Marius judged it neceſſary to encamp on the banks of the Rhone, in a ſituation naturally advantageous, where he laid in all ſorts of proviſions in great abundance, that he might not be compelled to engage before he ſaw a convenient opportunity. This coolneſs of the general was regarded by thoſe Barbarians, as a mark of cowardice. They reſolved, therefore, to divide themſelves into different bodies, and ſo penetrate into Italy. The Cimbri and Tigurini went to meet Catulus; the Ambrones and Teutones hoping to provoke the Romans to fight, came and encamped in a plain full in their front. But nothing could induce Marius to change his reſolution.

Nevertheleſs, theſe Barbarians inſulted the Romans inceſſantly by every means they could deviſe: they advanced as far as the very intrenchments of their camp, to reproach and deride them; they challenged the officers and the general himſelf to ſingle combat. The Roman ſoldiers were by degrees accuſtomed to look their enemies in the face, while the provocations they received every day, more and more whetted their reſentment. Many of them

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even broke out into reproaches againſt Marius for appearing ſo much to diſtruſt their courage; and this dexterous general to appeaſe them, had recourſe to a Syrian propheteſs in his camp, who aſſured them that the Gods did not yet approve of their fighting.

At length, the patience of the Teutones was exhauſted, and they endeavoured to force the Roman intrenchments; but here they were repulſed with loſs: upon which, they reſolved to abandon their camp, and attempt an irruption into Italy. They filed off for ſix days together in the preſence of Marius's army, inſulting his ſoldiers with the moſt provoking language, and aſking them, if they had any meſſage to ſend to their wives, whom they hoped ſoon to ſee. Marius heard all theſe bravados with his accuſtomed coolneſs; but when their whole army was paſſed by, he followed them as far as Aix in Provence, haraſſing their rear-guard without intermiſſion. When he was arrived at this place, he halted, in order to let his ſoldiers enjoy what they had ardently deſired ſo long, a pitched battle. They began with ſkirmiſhing on both ſides, till the fight inſenſibly growing more ſerious, at length both armies made the moſt furious attacks. Thirty thouſand Ambrones advanced firſt, marching in a kind

of meaſure to the ſound of their inſtruments. A body of Ligurians, ſupported by the Romans, repulſed them with great loſs: but as they betook themſelves to flight, their wives came forth to meet them with ſwords and hatchets in their hands, and bitterly reproaching them, and ſtriking indiſcriminately friend and foe, endeavoured to ſnatch with their naked hands the enemies weapons, maintaining an invincible firmneſs even till death. This firſt action raiſed the courage of the Romans, and was the prelude to a victory ſtill more deciſive.

After the greateſt part of the Ambrones had periſhed in that day's action, Marius cauſed his army to retire back to his camp, ordering them to keep ſtrict watch, and to lye cloſe without making any movement; as if they were affrighted at their own victory. On the other hand, in the camp of the Teutones were heard continual howlings, like to thoſe of ſavage beaſts; ſo hideous, that the Romans, and even their general himſelf could not help teſtifying their horror. They notwithſtanding lay quiet that night, and the day following, being buſily employed in preparing all things for a ſecond engagement. Marius, on his part, took all neceſſary precautions; he placed in an ambuſcade three thouſand

men commanded by Marcellus, with orders to attack the enemy in the rear, as ſoon as they ſhould perceive the battle was begun. When both armies were come within fight of each other, Marius commanded his cavalry to diſmount; but the Teutones hurried on by that blind impetuoſity which diſtinguiſhes all barbarous nations, inſtead of waiting till the Romans were come down into the plain, attacked them on an eminence where they were advantageouſly poſted. At the ſame inſtant, Marcellus appeared ſuddenly behind with his troops, and hemming them in, threw their ranks into diſorder, ſo that they were quickly forced to fly. Then the victory declared itſelf entirely in favour of the Romans, and a moſt horrible carnage enſued. If we may take literally what ſome of the Roman hiſtorians have * related, there periſhed more than a hundred thouſand Teutones including the priſoners. Others content themſelves with ſaying, that the number of the ſlain was incredible; that the inhabitants of Marſeilles for a long time after, made incloſures for their gardens and vineyards with the bones; and that the earth thereabouts was ſo much fattened, that its increaſe of produce was

* See Plutarch's Life of Marius.

prodigious. Marius loaded with glory, after a victory ſo illuſtrious in itſelf, and ſo important in its conſequences, was a fifth time honoured with the conſular faſces; but he would not triumph till he had ſecured the repoſe of Italy, by the entire defeat of all the Barbarians. The Cimbri, who had ſeparated themſelves from the Teutones, ſtill threatened its ſafety. They had penetrated as far as the banks of the Adige; which Catulus Luctatius was not ſtrong enough to prevent them from croſſing. The progreſs they made ſtill cauſed violent alarms in Rome; Marius was charged to raiſe a new army with the utmoſt ſpeed, and to go and engage them. The Cimbri had halted near the Po, in hopes that the Teutones, of whoſe fate they were ignorant, would quickly join them. Wondering at the delay of theſe their aſſociates, they ſent to Marius a ſecond time, to demand an allotment of land, ſufficient to maintain themſelves, and the Teutones their brethren. Marius anſwered them, that "their brethren already "poſſeſſed more than they deſired, and that "they would not eaſily quit, what he had "aſſigned them." The Cimbri irritated by this raillery, inſtantly reſolved to take ample vengeance.

They prepared immediately for battle, and their king or general, named Bojorix,

approached the Roman camp with a ſmall party of horſe, to challenge Marius, and to agree with him on a day and place of action. Marius anſwered, that although it was not the cuſtom of the Romans to conſult their enemies on this ſubject, he would notwithſtanding for once oblige them, and therefore appointed the next day but one, and the plain of Verceil for their meeting. At the time appointed, the two armies marched thither; the Romans ranged themſelves in two wings: Catulus commanded a body of twenty thouſand men, and Sylla was in the number of his officers. The Cimbri formed with their infantry an immenſe ſquare batallion: their cavalry, conſiſting of fifteen thouſand men, was magnificently mounted; each ſoldier bore upon his helmet the head of ſome ſavage beaſt, with its mouth gaping wide; an iron cuiraſs covered his body, and he carried a long halberd in his hand. The extreme heat of the weather was very favourable to the Romans. They had been careful to get the ſun on their backs; while the Cimbri little accuſtomed to its violence, had it in their faces. Beſides this, the duſt hid from the eyes of the Romans the aſtoniſhing multitude of their enemies, ſo that they fought with the more confidence, and of courſe more courage. The Cim-

bri, exhauſted and diſpirited, were quickly routed. A precaution, which they had taken to prevent their being diſperſed, only ſerved to forward their ruin: they had linked the ſoldiers of the foremoſt ranks to one another with chains; in theſe they were entangled, and thereby expoſed the more to the blows of the Romans. Such as could fly, met with new dangers in their camp; for their women who ſat upon their chariots, clothed in black, received them as enemies, and maſſacred without diſtinction their fathers, brothers and huſbands: they even carried their rage to ſuch a height, as to daſh out the brains of their children; and compleated the tragedy, by throwing themſelves under their chariot wheels. After their example, their huſbands in deſpair turned their arms againſt one another, and ſeemed to join with the Romans in promoting their own defeat. In the dreadful ſlaughter of that day, a hundred and twenty thouſand are ſaid to have periſhed; and if we except a few families of the Cimbri, which remained in their own country, and a ſmall number who eſcaped, one may ſay, that this fierce and valiant nation was all mowed down at one ſingle ſtroke. This laſt victory procured Marius the honours of a triumph, and the ſervices he thereby rendered the commonwealth appeared ſo great,

that he received the glorious title of third founder of Rome.

Thus have we given in a few words, what hiſtorians relate of the expedition of the Cimbri; it drew upon them for a moment, the attention of all Europe. But as literature, and the fine arts, can alone give laſting fame to a nation, and as we eaſily loſe the remembrance of thoſe evils we no longer fear, this torrent was no ſooner withdrawn within its ancient bounds, but the Romans themſelves loſt ſight of it, ſo that we ſcarcely find any farther mention of the Cimbri in any of their writers. Strabo only informs us, that they afterwards ſought the friendſhip of Auguſtus, and ſent for a preſent a vaſe, which they made uſe of in their ſacrifices; and Tacitus tells us, in one word *, that the Cimbri had nothing left but a celebrated name, and a reputation as ancient as it was extenſive.

Thus whatever figure this expedition made, we know but little the more of the nation which ſent it forth. Nevertheleſs, what is related of their tall ſtature and ferocity deſerves to be remarked, becauſe if we may believe all the antient hiſtorians of the

* *Parva nunc civitas, famæ latè veſtigia manent, ſed gloria ingens, veteriſque* Tacit. Germ. c. 37.

north, and even many among the moderns, Scandinavia was peopled only with giants in thoſe remote ages, which precede the epoque of hiſtory. The Icelandic mythology, which I ſhall have more than once occaſion to quote, relates very exactly all the engagements, which the giants had with thoſe Scythians, whom Odin brought with him out of Aſia.

They pretend that this monſtrous race ſubſiſted for a long time in the mountains and foreſts of Norway, where they continued even down to the ninth century; that they fled from the open day, and renounced all commerce with men, living only with thoſe of their own ſpecies in the ſolitudes and cliffs of the rocks; that they fed on human fleſh, and clothed themſelves in the raw ſkins of wild beaſts; that they were ſo ſkilled in magic, as to be able to faſcinate the eyes of men, and prevent them from ſeeing the objects before them; yet were at the ſame time ſuch religious obſervers of their word, that their fidelity hath paſſed into a proverb *; that in proceſs of time, they intermixed with the women of our ſpecies, and produced demi-giants, who approaching nearer and nearer to the human race, at length became mere men, like

* *Trollorum Fides.*

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ourſelves †. If all theſe circumſtances are compared and examined, we ſhall find no great difficulty in clearing up the truth. When Odin and his companions came to eſtabliſh themſelves in the north, there is no doubt but the Cimbri, or original inhabitants of the country, would ſtoutly diſpute the poſſeſſion of it with them. Afterwards when they were conquered and driven out, the remains of this barbarous nation would be apt to take refuge among the rocks and deſarts, where their rough and ſavage way of living ‡ could not but increaſe their native ferocity. The fear of being diſcovered by the conquerors, reduced them to the neceſſity of ſeeking by night the only proviſions that were left them; and as their tallneſs of ſtature, their cloathing of ſkins, and their ſavage air could not fail ſometimes to make

† TORF. Hiſt. Norveg. Tom. 1. Lib. 3. cap. 4 ARNG. JON. Crymogria. Lib. 1. p. 44.

‡ The Aſiatics brought with them into the north, a degree of luxury and magnificence, which were before unknown there. The author of an old Iſlandic chronicle, intitled, LANDNAMA-SAGA, ſpeaking of a certain perſon, ſays, "that he was "ſo well clothed, that "you would take him for "one of the [ASES] A-"ſiatics." P. 3. cap. 10. p. 102. apud Sperling. in nov. liter. M. B. an. 1699. M. Jun. Hence proceeded their contempt for the ancient inhabitants of the country, who were worſe clad and leſs civilized than themſelves.

their conquerors tremble; that hatred which is always mixed with fear, may have given birth to the charge of their being canibals and magicians. Exceſs of fear faſcinates and dazzles the ſight more certainly than the ſorceries of which they were accuſed: and their enemies may have encouraged this opinion partly through ſuperſtition, and partly to ſet off their own courage. The probity for which this people was ſo famous, proves pretty plainly that the picture was over-charged. In proceſs of time, the ſubject of theſe ancient wars was forgotten; love performed the office of mediator between both people, their mutual ſhyneſs inſenſibly wore off, and as ſoon as they began to ſee one another more nearly, all theſe prodigies vaniſhed away.

After all, I do not pretend to decide whether the firſt inhabitants of theſe countries were all of them, without any mixture, of Germanic origin, Cimbri and Teutones. For although to me this appears very probable with regard to Denmark, it cannot be denied that the Finns and Lapplanders anciently poſſeſſed a much more conſiderable part of Scandinavia than they do at preſent. This was the opinion of Grotius and Leibnitz. According to them, theſe people were formerly ſpread over the ſouthern parts of Norway and Sweden, whence

whence in proceſs of time, they have been driven out by new colonies of Scythians and Germans, and baniſhed among the northern rocks; in like manner as the ancient inhabitants of Britain have been diſpoſſeſſed by the Saxons of the greateſt and moſt pleaſant part of their iſland, and conſtrained to conceal themſelves among the mountains in Wales, where to this day, they retain their language, and preſerve ſome traces of their ancient manners. But whether the Finlanders were formerly the intire poſſeſſors of Scandinavia, or were only ſomewhat more numerous than they are at preſent, it is very certain that this nation hath been eſtabliſhed there from the earlieſt ages, and hath always differed from the other inhabitants of the north, by features ſo ſtrong and remarkable, that we muſt acknowledge their original to be as different from that of the others, as it is utterly unknown to us. The language of the Finns hath nothing in common with that of any neighbouring people, neither doth it reſemble any dialect of the ancient 'Gothic,' Celtic or Sarmatian tongues, which were formerly the only ones that prevailed among the barbarous people of Europe. The learned, who have taken the pains to compare the great Finland bible printed at Abo, with a multitude of others,

could never find the leaſt reſemblance between this and any other known language *; ſo that after all their reſearches on this head, they have been obliged to propoſe mere conjectures, among which mankind are divided according to the particular light in which every one views the ſubject.

* Stiernhelm, a learned Swede, thought he diſcovered in the Finland tongue, many Hungarian words, and ſtill more Greek ones. (Vid. Præfat. in Evangel. Gothica 1671, 4to.) But what the author ſays above, may be notwithſtanding true of the general ſtructure of the language; and Stiernhelm was probably fanciful.

T.

CHAP-

CHAPTER III.

The grounds of the ancient hiſtory of Denmark, and of the different opinions concerning it.

ON whatever ſide we direct our inquiries concerning the firſt inhabitants of Denmark, I believe nothing certain can be added to the account given of them above. It is true, if we will take for our guides certain modern authors, our knowledge will not be confined within ſuch ſcanty limits. They will lead us ſtep by ſtep through an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of kings and judges, up to the firſt ages of the world, or at leaſt to the deluge: and there, receiving the deſcendants of Noah, as ſoon as they ſet foot out of the ark, will conduct them acroſs the vaſt extent of deſerts into Scandinavia, in order to found thoſe ſtates and kingdoms, which ſubſiſt at preſent. Such is the ſcheme of Petreius, Lyſchander, and other authors, who have followed what is called, among Daniſh hiſtorians, the

Gothlandic hypotheſis *, becauſe it is built upon ſome pretended monuments found in the iſle of Gothland on the coaſt of Sweden: monuments which bear ſo many marks of impoſition, that at preſent they are by common conſent thrown aſide among the moſt ill-concerted impoſtures.

The celebrated Rudbeck, a learned Swede, zealous for the glory of his countrymen, hath endeavoured no leſs to procure THEM the honour of a very remote original; as if, after all, it were of any conſequence, whether a people, who lived before us ſo many ages, and of whom we retain only a vain reſemblance of name, were poſſeſſed ſooner or later of thoſe countries, which we quietly enjoy at preſent. As this author joined to the moſt extenſive learning an imagination eminently fruitful, he wanted none of the ma-

* PETREIUS is a Daniſh author of the 16th century: LYSCHANDER was hiſtoriographer to king Chriſtian IV. His work, printed in Denmark at Copenhagen in 1662, bears this title: "An abridgment of the "Daniſh hiſtories from "the beginning of the "world to our own "times." The arguments on which theſe authors found their accounts did not merit the pains, which Torfæus and others have taken to refute them. The reader may conſult, on this ſubject, the laſt-cited writer in his "Series "of kings of Denmark." Lib. i. c. 8.

terials

terials for erecting plauſible and frivolous ſyſtems. He hath found the art to apply to his own country a multitude of paſſages in ancient authors, who probably had never ſo much as heard of its name. According to him Sweden is the Atlantis of which Plato ſpeaks, and for this reaſon he aſſumed that word for the title of his book. He makes no doubt but Japhet himſelf came thither with his family, and he undertakes to prove the antiquity of the Scandinavians by the expeditions, which according to him they have undertaken in the remoteſt ages *. The firſt of theſe he places in the time of Serug, in the year of the world 1900: the ſecond under the direction of Hercules in the interval between the years 2200, and 2500. He lays great ſtreſs upon the conformity which is found between the names, manners and cuſtoms of certain nations of the South and thoſe of the North, to prove that the former had been ſubdued by the latter; which he affirms could never have been done, if Scandinavia had not been for a long time back overcharged, as it were, with the number of its inhabitants. It doubtleſs cannot be expected that I ſhould go out of my way to encounter ſuch an hypotheſis, as this: it is

* See Ol. Rudbeck. Atlantica, cap. xxxv.

very evident that Rudbeck and his followers have falſely attributed to the Goths of Scandinavia, whatever the Greek or Latin hiſtorians have ſaid of the Getae, or Goths, who dwelt near the Euxine ſea, and were doubtleſs the anceſtors of thoſe people, who afterwards founded colonies in the North. And as to the arguments brought from a reſemblance of names, we know how little theſe can be depended on. Proofs of this kind are eaſily found whereever they are ſought for, and never fail to offer themſelves in ſupport of any ſyſtem our heads are full of.

Having thus ſet aſide theſe two pretended guides, there only remains to chuſe between Saxo Grammaticus* and Thermod Torfæus, The

* SAXO, ſurnamed on account of his learning, Grammaticus, or The Grammarian, wrote about the middle of the 12th century, under the reigns of Valdemar the Firſt and Canute his ſon. He was provoſt of the cathedral church of Roſchild, then the capital of the kingdom. It was the celebrated Abſalon, archbiſhop of Lund, one of the greateſt men of his time, who engaged him to write the hiſtory of Denmark; for which he furniſhed him with various helps. Saxo's work is divided into XVI books, and hath been many times printed. Stephanius publiſhed a very good edition of it at Sora, in the year 1664, with notes which diſplay a great profuſion of learning. SWENO, the ſon of Aggo, contemporary with Saxo, wrote alſo, at the ſame

The firſt of theſe ſuppoſes that a certain perſon, named Dan, of whom we know nothing but that his father was named Humble, and his brother Angul, was the founder of the Daniſh monarchy, in the year of the world 2910: that from him Cimbria aſſumed the name of Denmark; and that it hath been ever ſince governed by his poſterity. Saxo himſelf takes care to give us, in his preface, the grounds on which his account is founded. Theſe are, firſt, the ancient hymns or ſongs, by which the Danes formerly preſerved the memory of the great exploits of their heroes, the wars and moſt remarkable events of each reign, and even ſometimes the genealogies of princes and famous men. Secondly, the inſcriptions which are found up and down in the North, engraven on rocks and other durable materials. He alſo lays great ſtreſs on the Icelandic chronicles; and on the relations which he received from archbiſhop Abſalon. It cannot be denied but Saxo's

ſame time, and by the command of the ſame prelate, a hiſtory of Denmark which is ſtill extant. But this author ſeems rather to lean to the Icelandic hypotheſis; for he differs from Saxo in many eſſential points, and in particular concerning the founder of the monarchy, who, according to him, was Skiold the ſon of Odin, the ſame who, according to the Icelandic chronicles, was the firſt king of Denmark.

work is written with great elegance for the time in which it was compoſed, but the rhetorician and the patriot are every where ſo apparent, as to make us ſometimes diſtruſt the fidelity of the hiſtorian. In ſhort, to be convinced that this high antiquity, which he attributes to the Daniſh monarchy, is extremely uncertain, we need only examine the authorities on which he builds his hypotheſis. Torfæus *, a native of Iceland, and hiſtoriographer of Norway, hath ſhewn this at large in his learned "Series of kings "of Denmark." He there proves that thoſe ſongs, from which Saxo pretends to have extracted part of what he advanced, are in very ſmall number; that he can quote none of them for many entire books of his hiſtory; and that they cannot exhibit a chronological ſeries of kings, nor aſcertain

* THERMODIUS TORFÆUS, who was born in Iceland, in the laſt century, and died about the beginning of the preſent, had received his education at Copenhagen, and paſſed the greateſt part of his life in Norway. He was a man of great integrity and diligence, and extremely converſant in the antiquities of the North, but perhaps a little too credulous, eſpecially where he takes for his guides the ancient Icelandic hiſtorians, upon whoſe authority he hath filled the firſt volumes of his hiſtory of Norway with many incredible events. His treatiſe of the Series of the Princes and Kings of Denmark contains many curious reſearches, and ſeems to me to be his beſt work.

the

the date of any one event. Nor could the inſcriptions, adds he, afford greater aſſiſtance to that hiſtorian; they contain very few matters of importance, they are for the moſt part eaten away with time, and are very difficult to underſtand*. With regard to the Icelandic chronicles, Torfæus thinks that they might have been of great uſe to Saxo, had he often conſulted them; but this, notwithſtanding his aſſertions, does not ſufficiently appear, ſince they rarely agree with his relations. Finally, the recitals of archbiſhop Abſalon are doubtleſs of great weight for the times near to thoſe, in which that learned prelate lived; but we do not ſee from whence he could have drawn any information of what paſſed a long time before him. Upon the whole, therefore, Torfæus concludes, with

* WORMIUS had read almoſt all thoſe which are found in Denmark and Norway, as Verelius had alſo done the greateſt part of thoſe which ſubſiſted, in his time, in Sweden. Both of them agree, that they ſcarce throw any light upon ancient hiſtory. To be convinced of this, one need only to examine the copies and explanations they have given of them. See "OLAI "WORMII Monumenta "Runica." Lib. iv. and "OLAI VERELII Ru- "nagraphia Scandica an- "tiqua," &c. —— Since Verelius's work, there hath been publiſhed a compleat collection of all the inſcriptions found in Sweden, by JOHN GORANSSON; at Stockholm. 1750. Folio.

reaſon,

reaſon, that Saxo's firſt books, that is to ſay, nearly half his hiſtory, ſcarce deſerve any credit ſo far as regards the ſucceſſion of the kings, and the dates of the principal events, although they abound with various paſſages, which contribute to throw light on the antiquities of the North. Having thus overturned the hypotheſis of that ancient hiſtorian, let us now ſee whether Torfæus is equally ſucceſsful in erecting a new one in its ſtead.

The knowledge which this learned man had of the old Icelandic language, enabled him to read a conſiderable number of ancient manuſcripts, which have been found in Iceland at different times, and of which the greateſt part relate to the hiſtory of that iſland and the neighbouring countries. After having carefully diſtinguiſhed thoſe which appeared to him moſt worthy of credit, from a multitude of others which ſtrongly ſavoured of fiction and romance, he thought he had found in the former, materials for drawing up a compleat Series of Daniſh kings, beginning with Skiold the ſon of Odin, who, according to him, began his reign a ſhort time before the birth of Chriſt. Thus he not only cuts off from hiſtory all the reigns which, according to Saxo, preceded that aera; but he changes alſo the order of the kings, which ſucceeded it;

it; affirming that Saxo had one while inſerted foreign princes, another while lords or powerful vaſſals; that he had repreſented as living long before Chriſt ſome who did not reign till many years after; and that, in ſhort, he hath viſibly inlarged his liſt of monarchs, whether with deſign to flatter his own nation by making the Daniſh monarchy one of the moſt ancient in the world, or whether he only too credulouſly followed the guides who ſeduced him.

It will appear pretty extraordinary to hear a hiſtorian of Denmark, cite for his authorities, the writers of Iceland, a country cut off, as it were, from the reſt of the world, and lying almoſt under the northern pole. But this wonder, adds Torfæus, will ceaſe, when the Reader ſhall be informed, that from the earlieſt times the inhabitants of that iſland have had a particular fondneſs for hiſtory, and that from among them have ſprung thoſe poets, who, under the name of SCALDS, rendered themſelves ſo famous throughout the North for their ſongs, and for the credit they enjoyed with kings and people. In effect, the Icelanders have always taken great care to preſerve the remembrance of every remarkable event that happened not only at home, but among their neighbours the Norwegians, the Danes, the Swedes, the Scots, the Engliſh, the

Greenlanders, &c. The firſt inhabitants of Iceland were a colony of Norwegians, who, to withdraw themſelves from the tyranny of Harold Harfagre *, retired thither in the year 874; and theſe might carry with them the verſes and other hiſtorical monuments of former times. Beſides, they kept up ſuch a conſtant intercourſe with the other people of the North, that they could readily learn from them whatever paſſed abroad. We muſt add, that the odes of theſe Icelandic Scalds were continually in every body's mouth, containing, if we may believe Torfæus, the genealogies and exploits of kings, princes, and heroes: And as the poets did not forget to arrange them according to the order of time, it was not difficult for the Icelandic hiſtorians to compoſe afterwards, from ſuch memoirs, the chronicles they have left us.

Theſe are the grounds of Torfæus's ſyſtem: and one cannot help highly applauding the diligence and ſagacity of an author, who has thrown more light on the firſt ages of Daniſh hiſtory than any of his predeceſſors. At the ſame time we muſt confeſs, that there ſtill remains much darkneſs and uncertainty upon this ſubject. For,

* HARFAGRE is ſynonimous to our Engliſh FAIRFAX, and ſignifies FAIR LOCKS. T.

although

although the annals of the Icelanders are without contradiction a much purer ſource than thoſe which Saxo had recourſe to; and although the reaſons alledged by Torfæus in their favour are of ſome weight; many perſons, after all, will hardly be perſuaded that we can thence draw ſuch exact and full information, as to form a compleat and firm thread of hiſtory. For, in the firſt place, the Icelandic writers have left us a great number of pieces which evidently ſhew that their taſte inclined them to deal in the marvelous, in allegory, and even in that kind of narrations, in which truth is deſignedly blended with fable. Torfæus himſelf confeſſes * that there are many of their books, in which it is difficult to diſtinguiſh truth from falſhood, and that there are ſcarce any of them, but what contain ſome degree of fiction. In following ſuch guides there is great danger of being ſometimes miſled. In the ſecond place, theſe annals are of no great antiquity: we have none that were written before chriſtianity was eſtabliſhed in the North: now between the time of Odin, whoſe arrival in the North, according to Torfæus, is the firſt epoque of hiſtory, and that of the earlieſt Icelandic

* See his Series Dynaſt. et Reg. lib. i. cap. 6.

hiſtorian, elapſed about eleven centuries *. And therefore if the compilers of the Icelandic annals found no written memoirs earlier than their own, as we have great reaſon to believe, then their narratives are only founded on traditions, inſcriptions, or reliques of poetry.

But can one give much credit to traditions, which muſt have taken in ſo many ages, and have been preſerved by a people ſo ignorant? Do not we ſee that among

* This firſt Icelandic hiſtorian was ISLEIF, biſhop of Scalholt, or the ſouthern part of Iceland. He died in the year 1080. His collections are loſt, but there is room to believe that ARE, the prieſt, who is ſurnamed the SAGE, made uſe of them to compoſe his Chronicles, part of which are ſtill extant. This writer lived towards the end of the ſame century: as did alſo RÆMUND, ſurnamed the WISE or LEARNED, another Icelandic hiſtorian, ſome of whoſe works ſtill remain. He had compiled a very voluminous mythology, the loſs of which is much to be regretted, ſince what we have of it, which is only a very ſhort abridgment, throws ſo much light upon the ancient religion of the firſt inhabitants of Europe. SNORRO STURLESON is he of all their hiſtorians, whoſe works are moſt uſeful to us at preſent. He compoſed a Chronicle of the kings of Norway, which is exact as to the times near to his own. He was the chief magiſtrate or ſupreme judge of the kingdom of Iceland, and was ſlain in a popular inſurrection, in 1241. With regard to the other Icelandic hiſtorians, the reader may conſult Torfæus's *Series Dynaſt. ac Regum Dan. lib.* i.

the common claſs of men, a ſon remembers his father, knows ſomething of his grandfather, but never beſtows a thought on his more remote progenitors? With regard to inſcriptions, we have already ſeen what aſſiſtance they were likely to afford: we may add that there are very few of them, which were written before the introduction of chriſtianity into the North; and, indeed, as we ſhall prove in the ſequel, before that time very little uſe was made of letters. Laſtly, as for the verſes or ſongs which were learnt by rote, it cannot be denied, but the Icelandic hiſtorians might receive great information from them, concerning times not very remote from their own. But was a rough and illiterate people likely to beſtow much care in preſerving a great number of poems, through a ſucceſſion of eight or nine centuries? Or can one expect to find in ſuch compoſitions much clearneſs and preciſion? Did the poets of thoſe rude ages obſerve that exactneſs and methodical order, which hiſtory demands? In the third place, if the Icelandic annaliſts could not know with certainty, what paſſed a long time before them in Iceland and Norway, muſt not their authority be ſtill weaker in what relates to a diſtant ſtate like that of Denmark; which doubtleſs in thoſe times had not ſuch intimate connec-

tions with the other countries of the North, as it hath had ſince? We muſt be ſenſible, that almoſt all that could be then known in Iceland of what paſſed in other nations, conſiſted in popular rumours, and in a few ſongs, which were handed about by means of ſome Icelandic Scald, who returned from thence into his own country.

What courſe then ought an hiſtorian to perſue, amid ſuch a wide field of contrary opinions, where the momentary gleams of light do not enable him to diſcover or trace out any certain truth. In the firſt place, I think he ought not to engage himſelf and his readers in a labyrinth of entangled and uſeleſs reſearches; the reſult of which, he is pretty ſure, can be only doubt. In the next place, he is to paſs rapidly over all thoſe ages which are but little known, and all ſuch facts as cannot be ſet clear from fiction. The intereſt we take in paſt events is weakened in proportion as they are remote and diſtant. But when, beſides being remote, they are alſo doubtful, unconnected, uncircumſtantial and confuſed, they vaniſh into ſuch obſcurity, that they neither can, nor ought to engage our attention. In thoſe diſtant periods, if any events occur, which ought not wholly to be paſt over in ſilence, great care ſhould be taken to mark the degree of probability

which

which appears to be due to them, leſt we debaſe hiſtory by reducing it to one undiſtinguiſhed maſs of truth and fable. It is true, by conforming to this rule, an hiſtorian will leave great chaſms in his work, and the annals of eight or nine centuries which, in ſome hands, fill up ſeveral volumes, will by this means be reduced within very few pages. But this chaſm, if it be one, may be uſefully filled up. Inſtead of diſcuſſing the doubtful facts which are ſuppoſed to have happened among the Northern nations, during the dark ages of paganiſm, let us ſtudy the religion, the character, the manners and cuſtoms of the ancient inhabitants during thoſe ages. Such a ſubject, I ſhould think, may intereſt the learned, and even the philoſopher. It will have to moſt readers the charm of novelty, having been but imperfectly treated of in any modern language: and ſo far from being foreign to the Hiſtory of Denmark, it makes a very eſſential part of it. For why ſhould hiſtory be only a recital of battles, ſieges, intrigues and negotiations? And why ſhould it contain meerly a heap of petty facts and dates, rather than a juſt picture of the opinions, cuſtoms and even inclinations of a people? By confining our inquiries to this ſubject, we may with

confidence conſult thoſe ancient annals, whoſe authority is too weak to aſcertain events. It is needleſs to obſerve, that great light may be thrown on the character and ſentiments of a nation, by thoſe very books, whence we can learn nothing exact or connected of their hiſtory. The moſt credulous writer, he that has the greateſt paſſion for the marvelous, while he falſifies the hiſtory of his contemporaries, paints their manners of life and modes of thinking, without perceiving it. His ſimplicity, his ignorance, are at once pledges of the artleſs truth of his drawing, and a warning to diſtruſt that of his relations *. This is doubtleſs the beſt, if not the only uſe, we can make of thoſe old reliques of poetry, which have eſcaped the ſhipwreck of time. The authors of thoſe fragments, erected into hiſtorians by ſucceeding ages, have cauſed ancient hiſtory to degenerate into a meer tiſſue of fables. To avoid this miſtake, let us

* This is the opinion of the learned BARTHOLIN, who hath written with ſo much erudition and judgment, upon certain points of the antiquities of Denmark. *Ad ritus*, ſays he, *moreſque antiquos eruendos, eos quoque evolvi poſſe codices exiſtimaverim, quos fabuloſis interſperſos narrationibus, in hiſtoria concinnanda haud tuto ſequaris.* Vid. Thom. Barthol. de Cauſ. &c. præfat.

conſider

conſider them only on the footing of poets, for they were in effect nothing elſe; let us principally attend to and copy thoſe ſtrokes, which, without their intending it, point out to us the notions, and mark the character of the ages in which they lived. Theſe are the moſt certain truths we can find in their works, for they could not help delivering them whether they would or not.

CHAPTER IV.

Of Odin, his arrival in the North, his conqueſts, and the changes which he made.

BEFORE I deſcribe the ſtate of ancient Scandinavia, I muſt ſtop one moment. A celebrated tradition, confirmed by the poems of all the northern nations, by their chronicles, by inſtitutions and cuſtoms, ſome of which ſubſiſt to this day, informs us, that an extraordinary perſon named ODIN, formerly reigned in the north: that he made great changes in the government, manners and religion of thoſe countries; that he enjoyed there great authority, and had even divine honours paid him. All theſe are facts, which cannot be conteſted. As to what regards the original of this man, the country whence he came, the time in which he lived, and the other circumſtances of his life and death, they are ſo uncertain, that the moſt profound reſearches, the moſt ingenious conjectures about them, diſcover nothing to us

us but our own ignorance. Thus previouſly diſpoſed to doubt, let thoſe ancient authors, I have mentioned, relate the ſtory: all their teſtimonies are comprized in that of SNORRO, the ancient hiſtorian of Norway, and in the commentaries and explications which TORFÆUS hath added to his narrative *.

The Roman Common-wealth was arrived to the higheſt pitch of power, and ſaw, all the then known world ſubject to its laws, when an unforeſeen event raiſed up enemies againſt it, from the very boſom of the foreſts of Scythia, and on the banks of the Tanais. Mithridates by flying, had drawn Pompey after him into thoſe deſarts. The king of Pontus ſought there for refuge, and new means of vengeance. He hoped to arm againſt the ambition of Rome, all the barbarous nations his neighbours, whoſe liberty ſhe threatened. He ſucceeded in this at firſt; but all thoſe people, ill-united as allies, ill-armed as ſoldiers, and ſtill worſe diſciplined, were forced to yield to the genius of Pompey. ODIN is ſaid to have been of this number. He was obliged to withdraw himſelf by flight from

* Vid. Snorro. Sturl. Chron. Norveg. in initio. —Torfæus Ser. Dynaſt. ac Reg. Dan. c. 11. p. 104. & ſeq.

the vengeance of the Romans; and to go ſeek in countries unknown to his enemies, that ſafety which he could no longer find in his own. His true name was Sigge, ſon of Fridulph; but he aſſumed that of ODIN, who was the Supreme God among the Scythians: Whether he did this in order to paſs among his followers for a man inſpired by the Gods, or becauſe he was chief-prieſt, and preſided over the worſhip paid to that Deity. We know that it was uſual with many nations to give their pontiffs the name of the God they worſhipped. Sigge, full of his ambitious projects, we may be aſſured, took care to avail himſelf of a title ſo proper to procure him reſpect among the people he meant to ſubject.

Odin, for ſo we ſhall hereafter call him, commanded the Aſes, a Scythian people, whoſe country muſt have been ſituated between the Pontus Euxinus, and the Caſpian ſea. Their principal city was ASGARD *. The worſhip there paid to their ſu-

* The teſtimony of the Icelandic annaliſts is confirmed by that of ſeveral ancient authors, of whom it is not likely that they had any knowledge. Strabo places a city named Aſburg in the very ſame country. L. 2. Pliny ſpeaks of the Aſceens, a people ſeated at the foot of mount Taurus. L. 6. c. 17. Ptolemy calls them Aſiotes. Stephen of Byſantium intitles them Aſpurgians [*Aſpurgitani.*] Mo-

ſupreme God was famous throughout the circumjacent countries; and it was Odin that performed the functions of it in chief, aſſiſted by twelve other Pontiffs (*Diar* or *Drottar*, a kind of Druids) who alſo diſtributed

Modern relations make mention alſo of a nation of Aſes or Oſſes ſeated in the ſame country; and there is reaſon to believe, that the city of Aſ-hof derived its name from the ſame ſource; this word ſignifies in the Gothic language, the ſame as Aſgard, or Aſburg. [Vid. Bayer. in Act. Academ. Petropol. Tom. 9. p. 387. & Dalin. S. R. Hiſt. T. 1. p. 101, & ſeqq.] But notwithſtanding all this, it is ſtill doutbtful whether Odin and his companions came ſo far. Snorro is probably the author of this conjecture founded on the ſimilitude of names. The moſt eminent chronicles, the poets, and tradition it is likely, ſaid only, that Odin came from the country of the Aſes: Now As in the Scythian language ſignifies a Lord, a God, and this name was in uſe among many Celtic nations. See Sueton. Aug. c. 97. Aſ-gard then ſignifies the court or abode of God, and the reſemblance of this name may have deceived Snorro. The learned Eccard in his Treatiſe of the Origin of the Germans, thinks that Odin came from ſome neighbouring country of Germany, where we find many names of places which are compounded of the word As, and it is poſſible that he may have ſojourned there a long time, and formed eſtabliſhments; though he or his nation came originally from ſome country of Scythia.

[Thus far our author in his ſecond Edition: in his firſt edit. he had obſerved that there was a ſtriking reſemblance between ſeveral cuſtoms of the Georgians, as deſcribed by Chardin, and thoſe of certain Cantons of Nor-

ed juſtice *. Odin having united under his banners the youth of the neighbouring nations, marched towards the north and weſt of Europe, ſubduing, we are told, all the people he found in his paſſage; and giving them to one or other of his ſons for ſubjects. Thus Suarlami was made king over a part of Ruſſia: Baldeg over the weſtern parts of Saxony or Weſtphalia: Segdeg had eaſtern Saxony, and Sigge had

Norway and Sweden, which have beſt preſerved the ancient manners. The learned Biſhop Pontoppidan mentions ſeveral of theſe in his Nat. Hiſt. of Norway. Tom. 2. c. 10. §. 1, 2, 3. The Georgians (adds our author) poſſeſs at preſent one part of the country, which was inhabited by the Aſes, whom Odin conducted into the north.]

* Among the ſeveral nations to whom theſe men diſtributed juſtice, the TURKS are often mentioned in the Icelandic chronicles. There was in effect, at the foot of mount Taurus, a Scythian people from the earlieſt times known by that name. Pomponius Mela mentions them expreſly; [Lib. 1. cap. 19. towards the end.] Herodotus himſelf ſeems to have had them in his eye. [Lib. iv. p. 22.] One part of the Turks followed Odin into the north, where their name had long been forgotten by their own deſcendants, when other offſhoots from the ſame root, over-ſpreading the oppoſite part of Europe, revived the name with new ſplendor, and gave it to one of the moſt powerful empires in the world. Such ſtrange revolutions have mankind in general undergone, and eſpecially ſuch of them, as long led a wandering unſettled life. *Firſt Edit*

Fran-

Franconia. Many ſovereign families of the north, are ſaid to be deſcended from theſe princes *. Thus Horſa and Hengiſt, the chiefs of thoſe Saxons, who conquered Britain in the fifth century, counted Odin or Woden † in the number of their anceſtors: it was the ſame with the other Anglo-Saxon princes; as well as the greateſt part of thoſe of Lower Germany and the north. But there is reaſon to ſuſpect that all theſe genealogies, which have given birth to ſo many inſipid panegyrics and frivolous reſearches, are founded upon a meer equivoque, or double meaning of the word Odin. This word ſignified, as we have ſeen above, the ſupreme God of the Scythians, we know alſo that it was cuſtomary with all the heroes of theſe nations to ſpeak of themſelves as ſprung from their divinities, eſpecially their God of War. The hiſtorians of thoſe times, that is to ſay the

* Snorro Sturleſon. Chron. Norveg. p. 4.

† ODIN in the dialect of the Anglo-Saxons was called WODEN or WODAN. The ancient chronicles of this people, particularly that publiſhed by Gibſon, expreſly aſſert that Hengiſt and Horſa were deſcended from him. We find there ten or twelve genealogies of the Engliſh princes traced up to the ſame ſource: and the Author concludes with this reflection: "It is "from Odin that all our "royal families derive "their deſcent." V. p. 13.

poets, never failed to beſtow the ſame honour on all thoſe whoſe praiſes they ſung: and thus they multiplied the deſcendants of ODIN, or the ſupreme God, as much as ever they found convenient.

After having diſpoſed of ſo many countries, and confirmed and ſettled his new governments, Odin directed his courſe towards Scandinavia, paſſing through Cimbria, at preſent Holſtein and Jutland. Theſe provinces exhauſted of inhabitants, made him no reſiſtance; and ſhortly after he paſſed into Funen, which ſubmitted as ſoon as ever he appeared. He is ſaid to have ſtaid a long time in this agreeable iſland, where he built the city of ODENSEE, which ſtill preſerves in its name the memory of its founder. Hence he extended his arms over all the north. He ſubdued the reſt of Denmark, and made his ſon Skiold be received there as king; a title, which according to the Icelandic annals, no perſon had ever borne before, and which paſſed to his deſcendants, called after his name Skioldungians *. Odin, who was apparently better pleaſed to give crowns to his children, than to wear them himſelf,

* If this name was not rather given them on account of the SHIELD, which they were accuſtomed to bear, for this is called SKIOLD in the Daniſh language to this day. *Firſt Edit.*

ſelf, afterwards paſſed into Sweden, where at that time reigned a prince named Gylfe, who perſuaded that the author of a new worſhip conſecrated by conqueſts ſo brilliant, could not be of the ordinary race of mortals, paid him great honours, and even worſhiped him as a divinity. By favour of this opinion which the ignorance of that age led men eaſily to embrace, Odin quickly acquired in Sweden the ſame authority he had obtained in Denmark. The Swedes came in crowds to do him homage, and by common conſent beſtowed the regal title and office upon his ſon Yngvon and his poſterity. Hence ſprung the Ynlingians, a name by which the kings of Sweden were for a long time diſtinguiſhed. Gylfe died or was forgotten. Odin governed with abſolute dominion. He enacted new laws, introduced the cuſtoms of his own country; and eſtabliſhed at Sigtuna (a city at preſent deſtroyed, ſituate in the ſame province with Stockholm) a ſupreme council or tribunal, compoſed of thoſe twelve lords *(drottar)* mentioned above. Their buſineſs was to watch over the public weal, to diſtribute juſtice to the people, to preſide over the new worſhip, which Odin brought with him into the north, and to preſerve faithfully the religious and magical ſecrets which that prince depoſited with them. He was

quickly acknowledged as a ſovereign and a God, by all the petty kings among whom Sweden was then divided; and he levied an impoſt or poll-tax upon every head through the whole country. He engaged on his part to defend the inhabitants againſt all their enemies, and to defray the expence of the worſhip rendered to the gods at Sigtuna.

Theſe great acquiſitions ſeem not however to have ſatisfied his ambition. The deſire of extending farther his religion, his authority and his glory, cauſed him to undertake the conqueſt of Norway. His good fortune or addreſs followed him thither, and this kingdom quickly obeyed a ſon of Odin named Saemungve, whom they have taken care to make head of a family, the different branches of which reigned for a long time in that country. If all the ſons of Odin were to have been provided for in the ſame manner, all Europe would not have afforded them kingdoms; for according to ſome chronicles, he had twenty eight by his wife Frigga, and according to others thirty one, or thirty two.

After he had finiſhed theſe glorious atchievements, Odin retired into Sweden; where perceiving his end to draw near, he would not wait till the conſequences of a lingering diſeaſe ſhould put a period to that life,

life, which he had ſo often bravely hazarded in the field: but aſſembling the friends and companions of his fortune, he gave himſelf nine wounds in the form of a circle with the point of a lance, and many other cuts in his ſkin with his ſword. As he was dying, he declared he was going back into Scythia to take his ſeat among the other Gods at an eternal banquet, where he would receive with great honours all who ſhould expoſe themſelves intrepidly in battle, and die bravely with their ſwords in their hands. As ſoon as he had breathed his laſt, they carried his body to Sigtuna, where conformably to a cuſtom introduced by him into the north, his body was burnt with much pomp and magnificence.

Such was the end of this man, whoſe death was as extraordinary as his life. The looſe ſketches which we have here given of his character, might afford room for many curious conjectures, if they could be depended on as well founded. Among thoſe which have been propoſed, there is nevertheleſs one which deſerves ſome attention. Several learned men have ſuppoſed that a deſire of being revenged on the Romans was the ruling principle of his whole conduct. Driven from his country by thoſe enemies of univerſal liberty; his reſentment, ſay they, was ſo much the more

violent, as the Scythians eſteemed it a ſacred duty to revenge all injuries, eſpecially thoſe offered to their relations and country. He had no other view, according to them, in running through ſo many diſtant kingdoms; and in eſtabliſhing with ſo much zeal his ſanguinary doctrines, but to ſpirit up all nations againſt ſo formidable and odious a power. This leven, which he left in the boſoms of the northern people, fermented a long time in ſecret; but the ſignal, they add, once given, they all fell as it were by common conſent upon this unhappy empire; and after many repeated ſhocks, intirely overturned it; thereby revenging the affront offered ſo many ages before to their founder.

I cannot prevail on myſelf to raiſe objections againſt ſo ingenious a ſuppoſition. It gives ſo much importance to the hiſtory of the North, it renders that of all Europe ſo intereſting, and, if I may uſe the expreſſion, ſo poetical, that I cannot but admit theſe advantages as ſo many proofs in its favour. It muſt after all be confeſſed, that we can diſcover nothing very certain concerning Odin, but only this that he was the founder of a new Religion, before unknown to the rude and artleſs inhabitants of Scandinavia. I will not anſwer for the truth of the account given of his original:

I only ſuſpect that at ſome period of time more or leſs early, either he, or his fathers, or the authors of his Religion, came from ſome country of Scythia, or from the borders of Perſia. I may add, that the God, whoſe prophet or prieſt he pretended to be, was named ODIN, and that the ignorance of ſucceeding ages confounded the Deity with his prieſt, compoſing out of the attributes of the one and the hiſtory of the other, a groſs medley, in which we can at preſent diſtinguiſh nothing very certain. New proofs of this confuſion will occur in all we ſhall hereafter produce on this ſubject; and it will behove the Reader never to loſe ſight of this obſervation. I ſhall now mention ſome farther particulars recorded of Odin by the Icelandic writers; which will not only confirm what I have been ſaying, but give us ſome inſight into his character.

One of the artifices, which he employed with the greateſt ſucceſs, in order to conciliate the reſpect of the people, was to conſult in all difficult emergencies the head of one MIMER, who in his life time had been in great reputation for his wiſdom. This man's head having been cut off, Odin cauſed it to embalmed, and had the addreſs to perſuade the Scandinavians, that by his enchantments he had reſtored

to it the uſe of ſpeech. He carried it every where about with him, and made it pronounce whatever oracles he wanted. This artifice reminds us of the Pigeon *, which brought to Mahomet the commands of heaven, and proves pretty plainly, that neither of theſe impoſtors had to do with a very ſubtle and diſcerning people. We find another feature of great reſemblance in their characters, and that is the eloquence, with which both of them are ſaid to have been gifted. The Icelandic chronicles paint out Odin as the moſt perſuaſive of men. They tell us, that nothing could reſiſt the force of his words, that he ſometimes enlivened his harangues with verſes, which he compoſed extempore, and that he was not only a great poet, but that it was he who firſt taught the art of poeſy to the Scandinavians. He was alſo the inventor of the Runic characters, which ſo long prevailed among that people. But what moſt contributed to make him paſs for a God, was his ſkill in magic. He perſuaded his followers, that he could run over the world in the twinkling of an eye, that he had the direction of the air and tempeſts, that he could transform himſelf into all ſorts of ſhapes, could raiſe the dead, could foretel

* Yet this is now proved to be a fiction. See Sale's Preface to the Koran. T.

things to come, could by enchantments deprive his enemies of health and vigour, and diſcover all the treaſures concealed in the earth. The ſame authors add, that he alſo knew how to ſing airs ſo tender and melodious, that the very plains and mountains would open and expand with delight; and that the ghoſts attracted by the ſweetneſs of his ſongs, would leave their infernal caverns, and ſtand motionleſs about him.

But if his eloquence, together with his auguſt and venerable deportment, procured him love and reſpect in a calm and peaceable aſſembly, he was no leſs dreadful and furious in battle. He inſpired his enemies with ſuch terror, that they thought they could not deſcribe it better, than by ſaying he rendered them blind and deaf; that he changed himſelf into the ſhape of a bear, a wild-bull, or a lion; that he would appear like a wolf all deſperate; and biting his very ſhield for rage, would throw himſelf amidſt the oppoſing ranks, making round him the moſt horrible carnage, without receiving any wound himſelf.

Some later hiſtorians ſeem to be a good deal puzzled how to account for theſe prodigies. In my opinion, the only thing that ought to aſtoniſh us, would be the weak credulity of the people whom Odin

was able ſo to impoſe upon, if ſo many examples ancient and modern had not taught us how far ignorance is able to degrade all the powers of the human mind. For why need we ſuppoſe this famous leader ever really employed the pretended ſcience of magic, when we know in general that mankind hath been at all times and in all countries the dupes of the firſt impoſtor, who thought it worth his while to abuſe them; that the people who then inhabited Scandinavia were in particular plunged in the thickeſt clouds of ignorance; that the hiſtorians who have tranſmitted to us the accounts of all theſe prodigies were Poets, figurative and hyperbolical in their language, fond of the marvellous by profeſſion, and at that time diſpoſed to believe it by habit. That the reſemblance of names makes it very eaſy for us at this time to confound the deſcriptions given by ancient authors of their ſupreme Deity, with thoſe which characterize this Aſiatic Prince; and finally, that the latter bringing along with him arts before unknown in the North, a luxury and magnificence thought prodigious in that rude country, together with great ſubtilty, and perhaps other uncommon talents, might eaſily paſs for a God, at a time

time when there were ſo few real men; and when the number of prodigies could not but be great, ſince they called by that name whatever filled them with ſurprize and wonder.

CHAPTER V.

A general idea of the ancient religion of the northern nations.

IT is not eaſy to form an exact notion of the religion formerly profeſſed in the north of Europe. What the Latin and Greek authors have written on this ſubject is commonly deficient in point of exactneſs. They had for many ages little or no intercourſe with the inhabitants of theſe countries, whom they ſtyled Barbarians; they were ignorant of their language, and, as 'moſt of theſe' nations * made a ſcruple of unfolding the grounds of their religious doctrines to ſtrangers, the latter, who were thereby reduced to be meer ſpectators of

* Particularly all thoſe of Celtic origin. The author had expreſſed it ſimply "As all the Celtic nations made a ſcruple," ſuppoſing the Gothic nations to be the ſame with the Celtic: but this opinion is conſidered in the preface.

their

their outward forms of worſhip, could not eaſily enter into the ſpirit of it. And yet if we bring together the few ſhort ſketches which theſe different writers have preſerved of it, if we correct them by one another, if we compare their accounts with thoſe of the ancient poets and hiſtorians of theſe nations themſelves, I flatter myſelf, we ſhall throw light enough upon this ſubject to be able to diſtinguiſh the moſt important objects in it.

The religion of the Scythians was, in the firſt ages, extremely ſimple. It taught a few plain eaſy doctrines, and theſe ſeem to have comprized the whole of religion known to the firſt inhabitants of Europe. The farther back we aſcend to the aera of the creation, the more plainly we diſcover traces of this conformity among the ſeveral nations of the earth; but in proportion as we ſee them diſperſed to form diſtant ſettlements and colonies, they ſeem to ſwerve from their original ideas, and to aſſume new forms of religion. The nations, who ſettled in the ſouthern countries, were they who altered it the firſt, and afterwards diſfigured it the moſt. Theſe people derive from their climate a lively, fruitful, and reſtleſs imagination, which makes them greedy of novelties and wonders; they have

alſo ardent paſſions, which rarely ſuffer them to preſerve a rational freedom of mind, or to ſee things coolly and impartially. Hence the wild frenzies of the Egyptians, Syrians and Greeks in religious matters; and hence that chaos of extravagances, in ſome reſpects ingenious, known by the name of mythology: through which we can hardly diſcover any traces of the ancient doctrines. And yet we do diſcover them, and can make it appear, that thoſe firſt doctrines, which the ſouthern nations ſo much diſguiſed, were the very ſame that compoſed for a long time after all the religion of the Scythians, and were preſerved in the North without any material alteration. There the rigour of the climate neceſſarily locks up the capricious deſires, confines the imagination, leſſens the number of the paſſions, as well as abates their violence, and by yielding only to painful and unremitted labour, wholly confines to material objects, that activity of mind, which produces among men levity and diſquiet.

But whether theſe cauſes have not always operated with the ſame efficacy, or whether others more powerful have prevailed over them; the greateſt part of the Scythian nations after having, for ſome time,

time, continued inviolably attached to the religion of their firſt fathers, ſuffered it at length to be corrupted by an intermixture of ceremonies, ſome of them ridiculous, others cruel; in which, by little and little, as it commonly happens, they came to place the whole eſſence of religion. It is not eaſy to mark the preciſe time when this alteration happened, as well for want of ancient monuments, as becauſe it was introduced by imperceptible degrees, and at different times among different nations: but it is not therefore the leſs certain, that we ought to diſtinguiſh two different epoques or ages in the religion of this people: and in each of theſe we ſhould be careful not to confound the opinions of the ſages, with the fables or mythology of the poets. Without theſe diſtinctions it is difficult to reconcile the different accounts, often in appearance contradictory, which we find in ancient authors. Yet I cannot promiſe to mark out preciſely, what belongs to each of theſe claſſes in particular. The lights which guide us at intervals through theſe dark ages, are barely ſufficient to ſhew us ſome of the more ſtriking objects; but the finer links which connect and join them together, will generally eſcape us.

Let us, firſt of all examine this religion in its purity. It taught the being of a "ſupreme God, maſter of the univerſe, to "whom all things were ſubmiſſive and "obedient *." Such, according to Tacitus, was the ſupreme God of the Germans. The ancient Icelandic mythology calls him "The author of every thing "that exiſteth; the eternal, the ancient, "the living and awful Being, the ſearcher "into concealed things, the Being that "never changeth." It attributed to their deity "an infinite power, a boundleſs "knowledge, an incorruptible juſtice." It forbade them to repreſent this divinity under any corporeal form. They were not even to think of confining him within the incloſure of walls †, but were taught that it

* No doctrine was held in higher reverence among the ancient Germans than this. *Regnator omnium Deus, cætera ſubjecta atque parentia*, ſays Tacitus, ſpeaking of their religion. De Mor. Germ. c. xxxv. The epithets that follow above are expreſsly given to the Deity in the old treatiſe of Icelandic mythology, intitled the EDDA, which has been mentioned above. See the tranſlation of this in the next volume.

† *Cæterum nec cohibere parietibus Deos, neque in ullam humani oris ſpeciem aſſimilare ex magnitudine cæleſtium arbitrantur. Lucos ac nemora conſecrant, Deorum quæ nominibus appellant*

it was only within woods and conſecrated foreſts, that they could ſerve him properly. There he ſeemed to reign in ſilence, and to make himſelf felt by the reſpect which he inſpired. It was an injurious extravagance to attribute to this deity a human figure, to erect ſtatues to him, to ſuppoſe him of any ſex, or to repreſent him by images. From this ſupreme God were ſprung (as it were emanations of his divinity) an infinite number of ſubaltern deities and genii, of which every part of the viſible world was the ſeat and temple. Theſe intelligences did not barely reſide in each part of nature; they directed its operations, it was the organ or inſtrument of their love or liberality to mankind. Each element was under the guidance of ſome Being peculiar to it. The earth, the water, the

appellant ſecretum illud quod ſolâ reverentiâ vident. Tacit. Germ. c. ix. One might here bring together a great multitude of authorities to prove that ſo long as theſe‡ nations had no communication with ſtrangers, their religion ſeverely prohibited the uſe of temples, idols, images, &c. But it is ſufficient to refer thoſe, who would ſee this ſubject treated more at large, to M. Pelloutier's *Hiſtoire des Celtes*, tom. ii.

‡ 'The Celtic nations.' Orig.

fire, the air, the ſun, moon, and ſtars had each their reſpective divinity. The trees, foreſts, rivers, mountains, rocks, winds, thunder and tempeſts had the ſame; and merited on that ſcore a religious worſhip, which, at firſt, could not be directed to the viſible object, but to the intelligence with which it was animated. The motive of this worſhip was the fear of a deity irritated by the ſins of men, but who, at the ſame time, was merciful, and capable of being appeaſed by prayer and repentance. They looked up to him as to the active principle, which, by uniting with the earth or paſſive principle, had produced men, animals, plants, and all viſible beings; they even believed that he was the only agent in nature, who preſerves the ſeveral beings, and diſpoſes of all events. To ſerve this divinity with ſacrifices and prayers, to do no wrong to others, and to be brave and intrepid in themſelves, were all the moral conſequences they derived from theſe doctrines. Laſtly, the belief of a future ſtate cemented and compleated the whole building. Cruel tortures were there reſerved for ſuch as deſpiſed theſe three fundamental precepts of morality, and joys without number and without end awaited every religious, juſt and valiant man.

Theſe

Theſe are the principal heads of that ancient religion, which probably prevailed for many ages through the greateſt part of the north of Europe, and doubtleſs among ſeveral nations of Aſia. It was preſerved tolerably pure in the North till towards the decline of the Roman republic: One may judge at leaſt by the teſtimony of ſeveral authors, that the Germans had maintained till that time the chief of theſe doctrines, whilſt the inhabitants of Spain, Gaul and Britain, half ſubdued by the arms and luxury of the Romans, adopted by degrees new Gods, at the ſame time that they received new maſters *. It is probable then, that it was not till the arrival of Odin in the North, that the Scythian religion among the ancient Danes and other Scandinavians began to loſe the moſt beautiful features of its original purity. Though the fact itſelf is probable, it is not ſo eaſy to aſſign the cauſes of it. Whether this change muſt be attributed to the natural inconſtancy of mankind and their invincible proneneſs to whatever is marvellous, and ſtrikes the ſenſes. Or whether we ought to throw the blame on that conqueror, and ſuppoſe with ſome authors that he had a formed deſign

* Pelloutier, chap. xvii.

to paſs among the northern people for a formidable deity; and to found there a new worſhip, on which to eſtabliſh his new dominion, and to eternize his hatred for the Romans, by planting among thoſe valiant and populous nations a perpetual nurſery of devoted enemies to every thing that ſhould bear that name. It is difficult to decide this queſtion. The eye is loſt and bewildered, when it endeavours to trace out events ſo remote and obſcure. To unravel and diſtinguiſh the ſeveral cauſes, and to mark exactly the diſtinct influence of each, is what we can hardly do in the hiſtory of ſuch ages as are the moſt enlightened and beſt known to us. Let us then confine ourſelves within more narrow limits, and endeavour to ſketch out a new picture of this ſame religion, as it was afterwards altered, and like a piece of cloth ſo profuſely overcharged with falſe ornaments, as hardly to ſhew the leaſt glimpſe of the original groundwork. This picture will take in a ſpace of ſeven or eight centuries, which intervened between the time of Odin and the converſion of Denmark to the Chriſtian faith. The Icelandic Edda, and ſome ancient pieces of poetry, wherein the ſame mythology is taught, are the ſources whence I ſhall draw my information. But the fear of falling into needleſs

needleſs repetitions, prevents me at preſent from deſcribing the nature of theſe ancient works, which are known but to few of the learned. This diſcuſſion will find its moſt proper place in the article which I reſerve for the ancient literature of the North.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Religion, which prevailed in the North, and particularly in Scandinavia, after the death of Odin.

THE moſt ſtriking alteration in the doctrines of the primitive religion, was in the number of the Gods who were to be worſhipped. A capital point among the Scythians, was that preheminence, I have been deſcribing, of one only all-powerful and perfect being over all the other intelligences with which univerſal nature was peopled. The firm belief of a doctrine ſo reaſonable had ſuch influence on their minds, that they openly teſtified on ſeveral occaſions their hatred and contempt for the polytheiſm of thoſe nations, who treated them as Barbarians; and made it their firſt care to deſtroy all the objects of idolatrous worſhip in whatever place they eſtabliſhed their authority *. But the deſcendants of theſe

* They demoliſhed the temples and ſtatues of their Gods: this was done by the Perſians (whoſe

theſe people being, in all appearance, weary of this ſimplicity of religion, aſſociated to the ſupreme God many of thoſe Genii or ſubaltern divinities, who had been always ſubordinate to him. As theſe differed rather in degree of power, than in eſſence, the tranſition was very eaſy to a people, who were not very refined and ſubtle. To this another reaſon alſo contributed. As each of theſe inferior divinities governed with abſolute power every thing within his reſpective ſphere; fear, deſire, all their wants, and paſſions inclined a rude people to have recourſe to them, as to a more preſent, ſpeedy and more acceſſible help in time of need, rather than to the ſupreme God, whoſe name alone imprinted ſo much reſpect and terror. It is an inevitable miſtake of the human mind to carry the imperfections of its own nature into the idea it forms of the Deity. The deep conviction we have every moment of our own weakneſs, prevents us from conceiving how it is poſſible for one ſingle being to move and ſupport all parts of the univerſe. This is eſpecially inconceivable to an ignorant peo-

(whoſe religion ſeems originally to have differed but little from that of the Scythians and Celtes) when under the banners of Xerxes they entered Greece. See Cicero de legibus, L. 2.

ple, who have never ſuſpected that there is any connection between the ſeveral parts of nature, and that a general mechaniſm can produce ſo many different phænomena. Accordingly, all barbarous nations have ever ſubſtituted, inſtead of the ſimple and uniform laws of nature which were unknown to them, the operation of ſpirits, genii and divinities of all kinds, and have given them as aſſiſtants to the ſupreme Being in the moral and phyſical government of the world. If they have paid to any of them greater honours than to others, it has uſually been to thoſe whoſe dominion extended over ſuch things as were moſt dear to them, or appeared moſt worthy of admiration. This was what happened in Scandinavia. In proceſs of time that ſupreme Being, the idea of whom takes in all exiſtence, was reſtrained to one particular province, and paſſed among the generality of the inhabitants for the God of war. No object, in their opinion, could be more worthy his attention, nor more proper to ſhew forth his power. Hence thoſe frightful pictures which are left us of him in the Icelandic Mythology *, where he is always meant under the name of Odin. He is there called " The terrible and ſevere God; the

* See the EDDA, Mythol. 3. & ſeq.

father

" father of ſlaughter; the God that carrieth " deſolation and fire; the active and roar- " ing deity; he who giveth victory, and " reviveth courage in the conflict; who " nameth thoſe that are to be ſlain." The warriors who went to battle, made a vow to ſend him a certain number of ſouls, which they conſecrated to him; theſe ſouls were Odin's right, he received them in VALHALL, his ordinary place of reſidence, where he rewarded all ſuch as died ſword in hand. There it was that he diſtributed to them praiſes and delight; there he received them at his table, where in a continual feaſt, as we ſhall ſee hereafter, the pleaſures of theſe heroes conſiſted. The aſſiſtance of this Deity was implored in every war that was undertaken; to him the vows of both parties were addreſſed; and it was believed that he often deſcended to intermix in the conflict himſelf, to inflame the fury of the combatants, to ſtrike thoſe who were to periſh, and to carry their ſouls to his celeſtial abodes.

This terrible Deity, who took ſuch pleaſure in ſhedding the blood of men, was at the ſame time, according to the Icelandic mythology, their father and creator. So eaſily do groſs and prejudiced minds reconcile the moſt glaring contradictions: this ſame God, whom they ſerved under a cha-

racter that would make even a man abhorred, according to the EDDA*, "liveth "and governeth during the ages, he di- "recteth every thing which is high, and "every thing which is low, whatever is "great and whatever is ſmall; he hath "made the heaven, the air, and man, who "is to live for ever: and before the heaven "and the earth exiſted, this God lived al- "ready with the giants." The principal ſtrokes of this picture are found many times repeated in the ſame work. They have been frequently uſed by other northern poets. Nor were they peculiar to the inhabitants of Scandinavia. Many ancient people, the Scythians, and the Germans for example, attributed in like manner to the ſupreme God a ſuperintendance over war. They drew their gods by their own character, who loved nothing ſo much themſelves, as to diſplay their ſtrength and power in battle, and to ſignalize their vengeance upon their enemies by ſlaughter and deſolation. Without doubt, this idea had taken deep root in the minds of the ancient Danes before the arrival of Odin. The expedition of the Cimbri plainly ſhows, that war was already in thoſe early times become their ruling paſſion, and moſt

* See Mythol. 3.

im-

important buſineſs: but it is nevertheleſs probable that this northern conqueror increaſed their natural ferocity, by infuſing into minds ſo prepared the ſanguinary doctrines of his religion. Without doubt, that intimate perſuaſion of theirs, that the ſupreme God appeared in battle; that he ſupported thoſe who defended themſelves with courage; that he fought for them himſelf; that he carried them away into heaven, and that this delightful abode was only open to ſuch as died like heroes, with other circumſtances of this kind was either the work of this ambitious prince, or only founded upon ſome events of his life, which they attributed to the ſupreme God, when they had once confounded them together *. The apotheoſis of this Chief and his companions which followed it, involves the hiſtory of thoſe times in great obſcurity. The Icelandic mythology never diſtinguiſhes the ſupreme Being, who had been adored in the north under the name

* Abbe Banier ſays very ſenſibly, that we ſhould always diſtinguiſh in the Gods of Antiquity, thoſe whoſe worſhip has been antecedent to the exiſtence of their great men, from thoſe who having been deified for ſome great actions, have been honoured with the ſame worſhip, as the Gods whoſe names they have taken. See his mythology. Vol. 3. Book 7. c. 2.

of Odin many ages before, from this prince of the Asis, who uſurped his name and the worſhip that was paid to him. All that one can juſt make ſhift to diſcover amidſt ſo much darkneſs, is that the Scandinavians were not ſeduced by the impoſtures of the Aſiatic Odin ſo far as to be generally perſuaded, that he was the ſupreme God, whoſe name he had aſſumed, and to loſe all remembrance of the primary belief. I think one may conjecture that it was principally the poets, who delighted to confound theſe two Odins for the better adorning the pictures they drew of them both *. Mention is ſometimes made of an ancient Odin, who never came out of Scythia, and who was very different from that other Odin that came into Sweden, and cauſed divine honours to be paid him at Sigtuna. Some authors make mention alſo of a third Odin, ſo that it is very poſſible this name may have been uſurped by many different warriours out of policy and ambition; of all whom poſterity made in proceſs of time but one ſingle perſon; much in the ſame manner as hath happened with regard to Hercules, in thoſe rude ages when Greece and Italy were no leſs barbarous than the

* Wormii Monumenta Danica. Lib. 1. p. 12. Therm. Torfœi Series Regum & Dynaſt. Dan. Lib. 2. c. 3.

northern

northern nations *. However that be, there remains to this-day ſome traces, of the worſhip paid to Odin in the name given by almoſt all the people of the north to the fourth day of the week, which was formerly conſecrated to him. It is called by a name which ſignifies ODIN'S DAY †; For as this God was reputed alſo the author of magic, and inventor of all the arts, he was thought to anſwer to the Mercury of the Greeks and Romans, and the name of the day conſecrated to him was expreſſed in Latin *Dies Mercurii* ‡.

The principal Deity among the ancient Danes, after ODIN, was FRIGGA or FREA his wife. It was the opinion of all the Celtic nations, of the ancient Syrians, and of the firſt inhabitants of Greece, that the ſupreme Being or celeſtial God had united

* 'Several learned men 'have proved very clearly 'that the word HERCU-'LES, was a name given 'to all the leaders of Co-'lonies, who came out of 'Aſia to ſettle in Greece, 'Italy and Spain. May 'not one conjecture with 'ſome probability, that 'the name of ODIN was 'given in like manner to 'all the leaders of Scy-'thian colonies, who came 'from Aſia to form ſettle-'ments in the north?'

† It is called in Icelandic *Wonſdag*, in Swediſh *Odinſdag*, in Low Dutch *Woenſdag*, in Anglo-Saxon *Wodenſdag*, in Engliſh *Wedneſday*, that is, the DAY of WODEN or Odin. Vide Junii Etymologicon Anglicanum, Fol. 1748.

‡ In French *Mercredi*.

with the Earth to produce the inferior divinities, man, and all other creatures. Upon this was founded that veneration they had for the Earth, which they conſidered as a goddeſs, and the honours which were paid her. They called her MOTHER EARTH, and MOTHER OF THE GODS. The Phenicians adored both theſe two principles under the names of TAUTES and ASTARTE. They were called by ſome of the Scythian nations JUPITER and APIA; by the Thracians COTIS and BENDIS; by the inhabitants of Greece and Italy, SATURN and OPS. All antiquity is full of traces of this worſhip, which was formerly univerſal. We know that the Scythians adored the Earth as a goddeſs, wife of the ſupreme God; the Turks celebrated her in their hymns; the Perſians offered ſacrifices to her. Tacitus attributes the ſame worſhip to the Germans, particularly to the inhabitants of the north of Germany. He ſays, "They adore the goddeſs HERTHUS*, (meaning the EARTH") and

* The name which Tacitus gives to this goddeſs, ſignifies the EARTH in all the northern (or Teutonic) languages. Thus it is in the ancient Gothic, *Airtha*: in the Anglo-Saxon, *Eorthe*, *Ertha*, *Hertha*: Engliſh, *Earth*: in Daniſh, *Jord*: in Belgic, *Aerde*, &c. Vid. Junii Etymolog. Anglican. T.

gives

gives a circumſtantial deſcription of the ceremonies which were obſerved in honour of her in an iſland, which he does not name, but which could not have been far from Denmark *. We cannot doubt, but this ſame goddeſs was the Frigga or Frea of the Scandinavians. The word FREA or † FRAU ſignifies a woman in the German language. When therefore the Aſiatic prince came into Denmark, and had found the worſhip of Odin and his wife the Earth eſtabliſhed, there is no doubt but the ſame people, who gave him the name of ODIN

* Cluverius pretends that it is the iſle of RUGEN, which is in the Baltic ſea, on the coaſt of Pomerania. Germ. Antiq. p. 134. Yet as Tacitus places it in the ocean, it is more likely to have been the iſle of HEILIGELAND, which is not far from the mouth of the Elb. The ANGLES (*Angli*, from whom our Engliſh anceſtors derived their name) were ſeated on this coaſt: and Arnkiel hath ſhown in his Cimbric Antiquities, that the ancient Germans held this iſland in great veneration. The word *Heiligeland*, ſignifies "Holy "Land." See Pelloutier's Hiſt. des Celtes. Tom. 2. Chap. 18.—— Other learned men pretend that the iſle in queſtion was ZEALAND, but it is after all, not very certain or important. Vid. Mallet's Firſt Edit. T.

† The Lydians and other people of Aſia minor acknowledged her under the name of *Rhea*, which is doubtleſs the ſame as *Frea* with a different aſpiration. *Firſt Edit.*

of God, gave his wife alſo the name of FREA conſecrated to the Earth, and that they paid her the ſame compliment they had done her huſband. Thus the ſame confuſion, which prevails in the deſcriptions given us of Odin, equally obtains in that of his wife; and without doubt the worſhip of both the one and the other underwent an alteration at this period. This Frea became in the ſequel, the goddeſs of love and debauchery, the Venus of the north, doubtleſs becauſe ſhe paſſed for the principle of all fecundity, and for the mother of all exiſtence. It was ſhe that was addreſſed in order to obtain happy marriages and eaſy child-births. She diſpenſed pleaſures, enjoyments and delights of all kinds. The Edda ſtiles her the moſt favourable of the goddeſſes; and in imitation of the Venus of the Greeks, who lived in the moſt tender union with Mars, Frea went to war as well as Odin, and divided with him the ſouls of the ſlain: and indeed it would have been very hard if the goddeſs of pleaſures had been deprived of an amuſement which her votaries were ſo fond of. It appears to have been the general opinion, that ſhe was the ſame with the Venus of the Greeks and Romans, ſince the ſixth day of the week which was conſecrated to her under the

name of Freytag, Friday, or Frea's day, was rendered into Latin *Dies Veneris*, or Venus's day *.

The third principal deity of the ancient Scandinavians was named THOR, and was no leſs known than the former among the Celtic nations. Julius Caeſar ſpeaks expreſly of a God of the Gauls, who was charged with the conduct of the atmoſphere, and preſided over the winds and tempeſts †. He mentions him under the Latin name of Jupiter: But Lucan gives him a name, which bears a greater reſemblance to that of Thor, he calls him Taranis, a word which to this day in the Welſh language ſignifies thunder ‡. It plainly appears, and is the expreſs opinion of Adam of Bremen, that the authority of this god, extended over the winds and ſeaſons, and particularly over thunder and

* She was alſo known under the name of *Aſtagod* or the goddeſs of love, a name which is not very remote from that of *Aſtarte*, by which the Phenicians denoted her; and under that of *Goya*, which the ancient Greeks gave to the earth. She was ſometimes confounded with the moon who was thought as well as her to have influence over the increaſe of the human ſpecies, for which reaſon the full moon was conſidered as the moſt favourable time for nuptials.

† Cæſar Comment. L. 6. c. 17.

‡ Pellout. Hiſt. des Celtes. Lib. 3. c. 6.

lightning §. In the ſyſtem of the primitive Religion, the God Thor was probably only one of thoſe genii or ſubaltern divinities, ſprung from the union of Odin or the ſupreme being, and the Earth. The Edda calls him expreſly the moſt valiant of the ſons of Odin *, but I have not diſcovered that the employment of launching the thunder was ever attributed to him. In reading the Icelandic mythology, I find him rather conſidered as the defender and avenger of the Gods. He always carried a mace or club, which as often as he diſcharged it, returned back to his hand of itſelf; he graſped it with gauntlets of iron, and was further poſſeſſed of a girdle which

§ *Thor præſidet in aere; fulmina, fruges gubernat.* (Adam Brem. Hiſt. Eccles. c. 233.) Dudo de St. Quentin obſerves the ſame thing of the Normans and Goths, adding that they offered human ſacrifices. There was alſo a day conſecrated to THOR, which ſtill retains his name in the Daniſh, Swediſh, Engliſh, and Low-dutch languages. [e. g. Dan. *Thorſdag*, Sued. *Torſ-dag*. Eng. *Thurſday*. Belg. *Donderdag*. Vide Jun. Etym.] This word has been rendered into Latin, by *Dies Jovis*, or Jupiter's day; for this Deity, according to ideas of the Romans alſo, was the God of Thunder. In conſequence of the ſame opinion, this day hath received a ſimilar name in the dialect of High-Germany. It is called there by a name compoſed of the word *Pen*, or *Penning*, which ſignifies the ſummit of a mountain, and the God, who preſides (in that place) over thunder and tempeſt.

* Edda Mythol. 7.

had the virtue to renew his ſtrength as often as was needful. It was with theſe formidable arms that he overthrew to the ground the monſters and giants, when the Gods ſent him to oppoſe their enemies.

The three deities, whom we have mentioned, compoſed the court or ſupreme council of the gods, and were the principal objects of the worſhip and veneration of all the Scandinavians: but they were not all agreed among themſelves about the preference which was due to each of them in particular. The Danes ſeem to have paid the higheſt honours to Odin. The inhabitants of Norway and Iceland appear to have been under the immediate protection of Thor: and the Swedes had choſen for their tutelar deity FREYA, or rather FREY, an inferior divinity, who, according to the Edda, preſided over the ſeaſons of the year, and beſtowed peace, fertility and riches. The number and employment of theſe deities of the ſecond order, it is not very eaſy to determine, and the matter beſides being of no great conſequence, I ſhall point out ſome of the moſt material. The Edda * reckons up twelve gods and as many goddeſſes, to whom divine honours were

* Edda, Mythol. 18.

due, and who though they had all a certain power, were nevertheleſs obliged to obey Odin the moſt ancient of the gods, and the great principle of all things. Such was NIORD †, the Neptune of the northern nations, who reigned over the ſea and winds. This was one of thoſe genii, whom the Celts placed in the elements. The extent of his empire rendered him very reſpectable, and we find in the North to this day traces of the veneration which was there paid him. The Edda exhorts men to worſhip him with great devotion for fear he ſhould do them miſchief: a motive like that which cauſed the Romans to erect temples to the FEVER: for fear is the moſt ſuperſtitious of all the paſſions ‡.

BALDER was another ſon of Odin, wiſe, eloquent, and endowed with ſuch great majeſty, that his very glances were bright and ſhining. TYR, who muſt be diſtinguiſhed from THOR, was alſo a warrior deity, and the protector of champions and

† Mythol. 21.

‡ Niord was the father of that Frey, the patron of the Swedes, whom I have mentioned above, and of Freya the goddeſs of beauty and love, who hath been confounded with Frea or Frigga, the wife of Odin. See the Edda, 20. *Firſt Edit.*

brave

brave men *. BRAGE preſided over eloquence and poetry. His wife, named IDUNA, had the care of certain apples, which the gods taſted, when they found themſelves grow old, and which had the power of inſtantly reſtoring them to youth ‖. HEIMDAL was their porter. The gods had made a bridge between heaven and earth: this bridge is the Rain-bow. Heimdal was employed to watch at one of the extremities of this bridge, for fear the giants ſhould make uſe of it to get into heaven. It was a difficult matter to ſurprize him, for the gods had given him the faculty of ſleeping more lightly than a bird, and of diſcovering objects by day or night farther than the diſtance of a hundred leagues. He had alſo an ear ſo fine that he could hear the very graſs grow in the meadows and the wool on the backs of the ſheep. He carried in the one hand a ſword, and in the other a trumpet, the ſound of which could be heard through all the

* From *Tyr* is derived the name given to the third day of the week in moſt of the northern languages, viz. in Dan. *Tyrſdag* or *Tiiſdag*; Sued. *Tiſdag*; Engliſh, *Tueſday*; in Low Dutch, *Dingſ-tag*: in Latin, *Dies Martis*. This proves that *Tyr* anſwered to *Mars*. The Germans in High Dutch call this day *Erichs-tag*, from the word *Heric*, or *Harec*, a Warrior, which comes to the ſame thing.

‖ Edda Mythol. 25.

worlds. I ſuppreſs here the names of the other gods, who made up the number of twelve; but I ought to beſtow a word upon LOKE, whom the ancient Scandinavians ſeem to have regarded as their evil principle, and whom notwithſtanding they ranked among the gods. The Edda * calls him "the calumniator of the gods, the "grand contriver of deceit and frauds, the "reproach of gods and men. He is beau-"tiful in his figure, but his mind is evil, "and his inclinations inconſtant. No "body renders him divine honours. He "ſurpaſſes all mortals in the arts of per-"fidy and craft." He hath had many children by SEGNIE his wife: beſides three monſters who owe their birth to him; the wolf FENRIS, the ſerpent MIDGARD, and HELA or Death. All three are enemies to the gods; who after various ſtruggles have chained this wolf till the laſt day, when he ſhall break looſe and devour the ſun. The ſerpent hath been caſt into the ſea, where he ſhall remain till he is conquered by the god Thor. And Hela or death ſhall be baniſhed into the lower regions, where ſhe hath the government of nine worlds, into which ſhe diſtributes thoſe who are ſent to her. We find here and there in the Edda

* Mythol. 26.

ſeveral

ſeveral other ſtrokes concerning Loke, his wars with the gods, and eſpecially with Thor, his frauds, their reſentment againſt him, and the vengeance they took of him, when he was ſeized and ſhut up in a cavern formed of three keen-edged ſtones, where he rages with ſuch violence that he cauſes all the earthquakes that happen. He will remain there captive, adds the ſame mythology, till the end of the ages; but then he ſhall be ſlain by Heimdal the door-keeper of the gods.

We have ſeen above that the Icelandic mythology reckons up twelve goddeſſes, including Frea or Frigga, the ſpouſe of Odin, and the chief of them all. Each of them hath her particular functions. EIRA is the goddeſs of medicine; GEFIONE of virginity: FULLA is the confident of Frea and takes care of her dreſs and ornaments. FREYA is favorable to lovers, but more faithful than the Grecian Venus, ſhe weeps inceſſantly for the abſence of her huſband ODRUS, and her tears are drops of gold. LOFNA makes up differences between lovers and married perſons though never ſo much at variance. VARA receives their oaths and puniſhes ſuch as violate them. SNOTRA is the goddeſs of learning and of good manners. GNA is the meſſenger of Frea.

Beſides theſe twelve goddeſſes there are other virgins in VALHALL or the paradiſe of the heroes. Their buſineſs is to wait upon them, and they are called VALKERIES. Odin alſo employs them to chuſe in battles thoſe who are to periſh, and to make the victory incline to whatever ſide he pleaſes. The court of the gods is ordinarily kept under a great aſh-tree, and there they diſtribute juſtice *. This aſh is the greateſt of all trees; its branches cover the ſurface of the earth, its top reaches to the higheſt heaven, it is ſupported by three vaſt roots, one of which extends to the ninth world, or hell. An eagle, whoſe piercing eye diſcovers all things, perches upon its branches. A ſquirrel is continually running up and down it to bring news; while a parcel of ſerpents, faſtened to the trunk, endeavour to deſtroy him. From under one of the roots runs a fountain wherein Wiſdom lies concealed. From a neighbouring ſpring (the fountain of paſt things) three virgins are continually drawing a precious water, with which they water the aſh-tree: this water keeps up the beauty of its foliage, and after having refreſhed its leaves, falls back again to the earth, where it forms the dew of which

* See the EDDA: Mythol. 14.

the

the bees make their honey. Theſe three virgins always keep under the aſh; and it is they who diſpenſe the days and ages of men. Every man hath a Deſtiny appropriated to himſelf, who determines the duration and events of his life. But the three Deſtinies of more eſpecial note are URD (the paſt), WERANDI (the preſent), and SCULDE (the future).

Such were the principal deities, formerly worſhipped in the north of Europe. Or rather theſe were the ideas which the poets gave of them to that credulous people. It is eaſy to diſcover their handy-work in theſe fictions, ſometimes ingenious, but more frequently puerile, with which they thought to ſet off the ſimplicity of the antient religion; and we ought not to believe, as we ſhall prove hereafter, that ſuch of them as were men of ſenſe and diſcernment ever conſidered them in any other light. But after having ſhewn the names and attributes of their principal Deities, let us proceed to ſet forth after the Edda and the poem named VOLUSPA *, the other Doctrines of their Religion.

* It is believed, that SÆMOND, ſurnamed the LEARNED, compiled a very extenſive Mythology, of which at preſent we have only an abridgment.

We have ſeen that among the qualities of which they ſuppoſed Odin or the Supream God to be poſſeſſed, that of the creator of heaven and earth is expreſsly attributed to him. It is very probable that moſt of the nations which were of Celtic race held opinions ſimilar to this, although the few monuments which remain at preſent of the Celtic religion, leave us ignorant in what manner their Druids or their philoſophers conceived this great event to have happened. What the Icelandic mythology hath preſerved to us on this head, merits ſo much the more attention, as it diſcovers to us the ſentiments of the ancient Scythians on this important point, and at the ſame time expreſſes them frequently with a greatneſs and ſublimity equal to the fineſt ſtrokes of claſſical antiquity on the ſame ſubject *. The poet begins by a deſcription

We have ſtill three or four fragments of this firſt EDDA, the moſt valuable of which is a poem of about 400 verſes, which is ſtill extant, and intitled the VOLUSPA, that is to ſay, "The Oracle of the "Propheteſs." It contains an abſtract of all the northern Mythology, and appears very ancient; but is not every where eaſy to be underſtood.

* I quote as much as poſſible the very words of the VOLUSPA, and when they

deſcription of Chaos. " In the day-ſpring " of the ages, ſays he, there was neither " ſea, nor ſhore, nor refreſhing breezes. " There was neither earth below, nor hea- " ven above to be diſtinguiſhed. The " whole was only one vaſt abyſs without " herb, and without ſeeds. The ſun had " then no palace: the ſtars knew not their " dwelling-places, the moon was ignorant " of her power." After this, continues he, " there was a luminous, burning, " flaming world towards the ſouth; and " from this world flowed out inceſſantly " into the abyſs that lay towards the " north, torrents of ſparkling fire, which " in proportion as they removed far away " from their ſource, congealed in their " falling into the abyſs, and ſo filled it " with ſcum and ice. Thus was the " abyſs by little and little filled quite full: " but there remained within it a light and " immoveable air, and thence exhaled icy " vapours. Then a warm breath coming " from the ſouth, melted thoſe vapours, " and formed of them living drops, whence " was born the giant YMER. It is re-

they appear to me too obſcure, I ſupply them from the EDDA, which is for the moſt part, only a kind of paraphraſe of this poem. See eſpecially Mythol. 4, 5, & ſeqq. Edd. Iſland. Reſenii. Havniæ, 1665. *Firſt Edit.*

" ported that whilſt he ſlept, an extraordi-
" nary ſweat under his arm-pits produced
" a male and female, whence is ſprung the
" race of the giants; a race evil and cor-
" rupt, as well as Ymer their author.
" Another race was brought forth, which
" formed alliances with that of the giant
" Ymer: This was called the family of
" Bor, ſo named from the firſt of that fa-
" mily, who was the father of Odin. The
" ſons of Bor ſlew the giant Ymer, and
" the blood ran from his wounds in ſuch
" abundance, that it cauſed a general in-
" undation, wherein periſhed all the
" giants, except only one, who ſav-
" ing himſelf in a bark, eſcaped with all
" his family. Then a new world was
" formed. The ſons of Bor, or the Gods,
" dragged the body of the giant in the
" abyſs, and of it made the earth: the ſea
" and rivers were compoſed of his blood;
" the earth of his fleſh; the great moun-
" tains of his bones; the rocks of his teeth
" and of ſplinters of his bones broken.
" They made of his ſcull the vault of hea-
" ven, which is ſupported by four dwarfs
" named South, North, Eaſt and Weſt.
" They fixed there tapers to enlighten
" it, and aſſigned to other fires certain
" ſpaces which they were to run through,
" ſome of them in heaven, others under

" the

" the heaven: The days were diſtinguiſhed,
" and the years were numbered. They
" made the earth round, and ſurrounded it
" with the deep ocean, upon the banks of
" which they placed the giants. One day,
" as the ſons of Bor, or the gods, were
" taking a walk, they found two pieces of
" wood floating upon the water; theſe they
" took, and out of them made a man and
" a woman. The eldeſt of the gods gave
" them life and ſouls; the ſecond motion
" and knowledge; the third the gift of
" ſpeech, hearing and ſight, to which he
" added beauty and raiment. From this
" man and this woman, named ASKUS and
" EMBLA, is deſcended the race of men
" who are permitted to inhabit the earth."

It is eaſy to trace out in this narration veſtiges of an ancient and general tradition, of which every ſect of paganiſm hath altered, adorned or ſuppreſſed many circumſtances, according to their own fancy, and which is now only to be found intire in the books of Moſes. Let the ſtrokes we have here produced be compared with the beginning of Heſiod's Theogony, with the mythology of ſome Aſiatic nations, and with the book of Geneſis, and we ſhall inſtantly be convinced, that the conformity which is found between many circumſtances of their recitals, cannot be the

mere work of chance. Thus in the Edda the deſcription of the Chaos; that vivifying breath which produces the giant Ymer; that ſleep during which a male and female ſpring from his ſides; that race of the ſons of the gods; that deluge which only one man eſcapes, with his family, by means of a bark; that renewal of the world which ſucceeds; that firſt man and firſt woman created by the gods, and who receive from them life and motion: all this ſeems to be only remains of a more ancient and more general belief, which the Scythians carried with them when they retired into the North, and which they altered more ſlowly than the other nations. One may diſcover alſo in the very nature of theſe alterations the ſame ſpirit of allegory, the ſame deſire of accounting for all the phænomena of nature by fictions, which hath ſuggeſted to other nations the greateſt part of the fables with which their theology is infected. To conclude, the ſtyle itſelf, in which the expreſſions, one while ſublime, one while extravagant and gigantic, are thrown together without art; the littleneſſes that accompany the moſt magnificent deſcriptions; the diſorder of the narrative; the uniform turn of the phraſes, confirms to all who read this work an idea of a very remote antiquity, and a mode of thinking and writing

writing peculiar to a ſimple and groſs people, who were unacquainted with any rules of compoſition, and whoſe vigorous imagination, deſpiſing or not knowing any rules of art, diſplays itſelf in all the liberty and energy of nature.

It was thus the world was created; or to expreſs it in a manner, more conformable to the Celtic notions, It was thus that the matter already exiſting but without order and without life, was animated and diſpoſed by the Gods in the preſent ſtate in which we behold it. I have already remarked, that they were far from ſuppoſing that after it had received the firſt motion from the hands of the Gods, the world continued to ſubſiſt, and to move independent of its firſt movers. Perhaps no religion ever attributed ſo much to a divine providence as that of the northern nations. This doctrine ſerved them for a key, as commodious, as it was univerſal, to unlock all the phænomena of nature without exception. The intelligencies united to different bodies, penetrated and moved them; and men needed not to look any farther than to them, to find the cauſe of every thing they obſerved in them. Thus entire nature animated and always moved immediately by one or more intelligent cauſes, was in their ſyſtem nothing more

than the organ or inſtrument of the divinity, and became a kind of book in which they thought they could read his will, inclinations and deſigns. Hence that weakneſs formerly common to ſo many nations, and of which the traces ſtill ſubſiſt in many places, that makes them regard a thouſand indifferent phænomena, ſuch as the quivering of leaves, the crackling and colour of flames, the fall of thunderbolts, the flight or ſinging of a bird, mens involuntary motions, their dreams and viſions, the movements of the pulſe, &c. as intimations which God gives to wiſe men, of his will. Hence came oracles, divinations, auſpices, preſages, and lots; in a word all that rubbiſh of dark ſuperſtitions, called at one time religion, at another magic, a ſcience abſurd to the eyes of reaſon, but ſuitable to the impatience and reſtleſſneſs of our deſires, and which only betrays the weakneſs of human nature, in promiſing to relieve it. Such notwithſtanding was the principal conſequence which the 'Gothic' nations drew from the doctrine of a Divine Providence. The ancient Danes carried it to as extravagant a pitch as the reſt, as will appear from what I ſhall ſay of their ſacrifices and preſages, when I come to treat of their exterior worſhip. With reſpect to the moral precepts, we know very well that

it

it hath ever been the failing of mankind to regard theſe as the leaſt eſſential part of religion. When they admitted that continual and immediate action of the divinity on all creatures, the Scandinavians had thence concluded that it was impoſſible for men to effect any change in the courſe of things, or to reſiſt the deſtinies. The Stoics themſelves did not underſtand this term in a more rigorous ſenſe than the people of the North. Nothing is more common in the ancient Chronicles than to hear their warriours complaining that the deſtinies are inflexible, that they are unatirable and cannot be ſurmounted. We have ſeen above that they reckoned the Parcae or Goddeſſes of deſtiny to be three in number, as well as the Greeks; and like them attributed to them the determination of all events. Every man had alſo his own deſtiny, who aſſiſted at the moment of his birth, and marked before hand the period of his days *. It is yet probable that they conſidered Odin or the ſupreme God, as the author and arbiter of the deſtinies. This

* It is this doctrine of the ancient Celtic (and northern) Mythology, which has produced all the ſtories of fairies, and the marvellous of modern Romances, as that of the ancient Romances, is founded on the Greek and Roman Mythology. This will appear more plainly in the ſequel of this work.

the Edda inſinuates pretty clearly, when it tells us, that he hath eſtabliſhed from the beginning governors to regulate the deſtinies of mortals. One may conceive what impreſſion this doctrine muſt have made upon men who were naturally warlike. Recent examples have ſhewn us, that it never fails among men to add ſtrength to their ruling paſſion, and to produce particularly in ſuch as love war, a blind temerity which knows neither meaſure nor danger *. But to this unlucky prejudice the ancient inhabitants of the north added another, the effects of which were no leſs barbarous: which was, that the term of a man's life might be prolonged, if any one would put himſelf in his place and die in his ſtead. This was often practiſed when a prince or illuſtrious warrior was ready to periſh by ſome accident; Odin appeaſed by ſuch a ſacrifice, and content to have a victim, revoked, they ſaid, the decree of the deſtinies and lengthened the thread of HIS life whom they were ſo deſirous to ſave.

The other precepts of this religion † probably extended no farther than to be brave and intrepid in war, to ſerve the

* The author (I ſuppoſe) alludes to Charles XII of Sweden: See his Hiſtory by Voltaire.

† As among all the Celtic nations. Orig.

Gods,

Gods, and to appeaſe them by ſacrifices; not to be unjuſt, to ſhow hoſpitality to ſtrangers, to keep their words inviolably, and to be faithful to the marriage bed. There are many remarks to be made upon the ſenſe in which theſe precepts were taken, and upon the manner in which they were obſerved; but to avoid repetitions, I ſhall reſerve them for the article in which I ſhall treat of the Manners of the ancient Danes: There we ſhall be beſt able to judge, what influence their religion had upon theſe people, and by a natural circle, thence form the moſt exact idea of the ſpirit of the religion itſelf. It is now time to diſcuſs another of its doctrines, that of the ſtate of man after death, and the final deſtiny of the world he now inhabits.

"There will come a time, ſays the Ed-
"da*, a barbarous age, an age of the
"ſword, when iniquity ſhall infeſt the
"earth, when brothers ſhall ſtain themſelves
"with brothers blood, when ſons ſhall be
"the murderers of their fathers, and fa-
"thers of their ſons, when inceſt and adul-

* See Mythol. 48. and 49. and the Poem of the VOLUSPA towards the end, as it is found in the Edit. of Reſenius. See alſo the fragments cited by Bartholin. De Cauſ. Contempt. a Dan. Gentil. mortis. L. 2. c. 14.

" tery ſhall be common, when no man ſhall
" ſpare his friend. Immediately ſhall ſuc-
" ceed a deſolating winter; the ſnow ſhall
" fall from the four corners of the world,
" the winds ſhall blow with fury, the whole
" earth ſhall be hard bound in ice. Three
" ſuch winters ſhall paſs away, without being
" ſoftened by one ſummer. Then ſhall ſuc-
" ceed aſtoniſhing prodigies: Then ſhall
" the monſters break their chains and eſ-
" cape: the great Dragon ſhall roll himſelf
" in the ocean, and with his motions the
" earth ſhall be overflowed: the earth ſhall
" be ſhaken; the trees ſhall be torn up by
" the roots; the rocks ſhall be daſhed
" againſt each other. The Wolf Fenris,
" broke looſe from his chains, ſhall open
" his enormous mouth which reaches from
" heaven to earth; the fire ſhall flaſh out
" from his eyes and noſtrils; he ſhall devour
" the ſun: and the great Dragon who fol-
" lows him, ſhall vomit forth upon the
" waters and into the air, great torrents
" of venom. In this confuſion the ſtars
" ſhall fly from their places, the heaven
" ſhall cleave aſunder, and the army of evil
" Genii and Giants conducted by SORTUR
" (the black) and followed by LOKE, ſhall
" break in, to attack the gods. But HE-
" IMDAL the door-keeper of the Gods,
" riſes up, he ſounds his clanging trumpet;

" the

" the Gods awake and aſſemble; the great
" Aſh-tree ſhakes its branches; heaven and
" earth are full of horror and affright. The
" Gods fly to arms; the heroes place
" themſelves in battle-array. Odin appears
" armed in his golden caſque and his re-
" ſplendant cuiraſs; his vaſt ſcimetar is in
" his hands. He attacks the Wolf Fenris;
" he is devoured by him, and Fenris pe-
" riſhes at the ſame inſtant. Thor is ſuf-
" focated in the floods of venom which the
" Dragon breathes forth as he expires.
" Loke and Heimdal mutually kill each
" other *. The fire conſumes every
" thing,

* It is very difficult to comprehend why the Scandinavians make their Gods to die thus, without ever returning again to life: For after the defeat of the three principal divinities, we ſee an all-powerful Deity appear upon the ſtage, who ſeems to have nothing in common with ODIN. The Stoics had probably the ſame ideas: there is at leaſt a very remarkable paſſage of Seneca the tragedian on this ſubject. It is where he deſcribes that conflagration which is to put an end to this world.

Jam jam legibus obrutis
Mundo cum veniet dies
Auſtralis polus obruet
Quicquid per Lybiam jacet, &c.
Arctous polus obruet
Quicquid ſubjacet axibus.
Amiſſum trepidus polo
Titan excutiet diem.

Cæli

" thing, and the flame reaches up to Heaven.
" But preſently after a new earth ſprings
" forth from the boſom of the waves,
" adorned with green meadows; the fields
" there bring forth without culture, cala-
" mities are there unknown, a palace is
" there raiſed more ſhining than the ſun,
" all covered with gold. This is the place
" that the juſt will inhabit, and enjoy de-
" lights for evermore. Then the POWER-
" FUL, the VALIANT, he WHO GOVERNS
" ALL THINGS, comes forth from his
" lofty abodes, to render divine juſtice.
" He pronounces decrees. He eſtabliſhes
" the ſacred deſtinies which ſhall endure
" for ever. There is an abode remote from

Cœli regia concidens
Ortus atque obitus trahet
Atque *omnes pariter Deos*
Perdet mors aliqua, et Chaos
Et mors et fata noviſſima
In ſe conſtituet ſibi
Quis mundum capiet locus?

So remarkable a conformity ſeems to ſuppoſe that the two ſyſtems had one common original, nor would it be aſtoniſhing if they had. There were among the barbarous nations Sages of great repute, as is acknowledged by the Greeks and Romans themſelves, ſtrongly prejudiced as they were againſt them: And it is very probable that more than one philoſopher had picked up among the Scythians or Thracians, conſiderable information, eſpecially with regard to religion and morality. *1ſt Ed.*

" the

" the ſun, the gates of which face the " North; poiſon rains there through a thou- " ſand openings: This place is all compoſed " of the carcaſſes of Serpents: There run " certain torrents, in which are plunged " the perjurers, aſſaſſins, and thoſe who " ſeduce married women. A black, winged " Dragon flies inceſſantly around, and de- " vours the bodies of the wretched who " are there impriſoned."

Notwithſtanding the obſcurities which are found in theſe deſcriptions, we ſee that it was a doctrine rendered ſacred by the religion of the ancient Scandinavians, that the ſoul was immortal, and that there was a future ſtate reſerved for men, either happy or miſerable according to their behaviour here below. All the 'Gothic and' Celtic nations held the ſame opinions, and it was upon theſe they founded the obligation of ſerving the Gods, and of being valiant in battle: But although the Greek and Latin hiſtorians who have ſpoke of this people, agree in attributing theſe notions to them, yet none of them have given any particular account of the nature of theſe doctrines; and one ought to regard in this reſpect the Icelandic mythology as a precious monument, without which we can know but very imperfectly this important part of the religion of our fathers. I muſt here ſacrifice to brevity

many reflections, which the picture I have here copied from thence, naturally preſents to the mind. Many in particular would ariſe on the ſurprizing conformity that there is between ſeveral of the foregoing ſtrokes, and thoſe employed in the goſpel to deſcribe the ſame thing. A conformity ſo remarkable that one ſhould be tempted to attribute it to the indiſcreet zeal of the Chriſtian writer who compiled this mythology, if the Edda alone had tranſmitted to us this prophecy concerning the laſt ages of the world, and if we did not find it with the ſame circumſtances in the VOLUSPA, a poem of greater antiquity, and in which nothing can be diſcovered that has an air of interpolation, or forgery.

One remark however ought not to be omitted, which is, that this mythology expreſly diſtinguiſhes TWO different abodes for the happy, and as many for the culpable: Which is what ſeveral authors who have writ of the ancient religion of Europe, have not ſufficiently attended to. The firſt of theſe abodes was the palace of Odin named VALHALLA, where that God received all ſuch as died in a violent manner, from the beginning to the end of the world, that is, to the time of that univerſal deſolation of nature which was to be followed by a new creation, and what they called RA-

RAGNAROCKUR, or the Twilight of the Gods. The ſecond, which after the renovation of all things was to be their eternal abode, was named GIMLE, that is, the Palace covered with Gold, the deſcription of which we have ſeen above, where the juſt were to enjoy delights for ever. It was the ſame as to the place of puniſhments; they diſtinguiſhed two of thoſe, of which the firſt named NIFLHEIM *, was only to continue to the renovation of the world, and the ſecond that ſucceeded it, was to endure forever. This laſt was named NASTROND †; and we have ſeen in the deſcription of the end of the world, what idea was entertained of it by the ancient Danes. With regard to the two firſt places, the VALHALLA and NIFLHEIM, they are not only diſtinguiſhed from the others, in being only to endure till the conflagration of the world, but alſo in that they ſeem rather intended to reward violence than virtue, and rather to ſtifle all the ſocial affections than to deter men from crimes. Thoſe only, whoſe blood had been ſhed in battle, might aſpire to the pleaſures which Odin prepared for them in Valhalla. The pleaſures which they expected after death, ſhew us plainly

* This word ſignifies the Abode of the wicked, from the iſland *Niſl* evil, and *Heim* home.

† The ſhore of the dead.

enough what they reliſhed during life. "The heroes, ſays the Edda *, who are re- "ceived into the palace of Odin, have "every day the pleaſure of arming them- "ſelves, of paſſing in review, of ranging "themſelves in order of battle, and of "cutting one another in pieces; but as ſoon "as the hour of repaſt approaches, they "return on horſeback all ſafe and ſound "back to the Hall of Odin, and fall to eat- "ing and drinking. Though the number "of them cannot be counted, the fleſh of "the boar SERIMNER is ſufficient for them "all; every day it is ſerved up at table, and "every day it is renewed again intire: their "beverage is beer and mead; one ſingle "goat, whoſe milk is excellent mead, fur- "niſhes enough of that liquor to intoxicate "all the heroes: their cups are the ſkulls of "enemies they have ſlain. Odin alone, "who ſits at a table by himſelf, drinks "wine for his entire liquor. A crowd of "virgins wait upon the heroes at table, and "fill their cups as faſt as they empty them." Such was that happy ſtate, the bare hope of which rendered all the inhabitants of the North of Europe intrepid, and which made them not only to defy, but even ſeek with ardor the moſt cruel deaths. Accordingly

* Edda Iceland. Mythol. 31, 33, 34, 35.

King

King Regner Lodbrog * when he was going to die, far from uttering groans, or forming complaints, expreſſed his joy by theſe verſes. "We 'are' cut to pieces with "ſwords: but this fills me with joy, when "I think of the feaſt that is preparing for "me in Odin's palace. Quickly, quickly "ſeated in the ſplendid habitation of the "Gods, we ſhall drink beer out of the "ſkulls of our enemies. A brave man fears "not to die. I ſhall utter no timorous "words as I enter the Hall of Odin." This fanatic hope derived additional force from the ignominy affixed to every kind of death but ſuch as was of a violent nature, and from the fear of being ſent after ſuch an exit into NIFLHEIM. This was a place conſiſting of nine worlds, reſerved for thoſe that died of diſeaſe or old age. HELA or death, there exerciſed her deſpotic power; her palace was ANGUISH; her table FAMINE; her waiters were EXPECTATION and DELAY; the threſhold of her door, was PRECIPICE; her bed LEANNESS: ſhe was livid and ghaſtly pale; and her very looks inſpired horror.

After this deſcription of the religion of the Scandinavians, can we be ſurprized

* See "Five Pieces of "Runic Poetry, tranſla-"ted from the Icelandic, Lond. 1763. 8vo.—Olaii Wormii Literatur. Run. ad calc.

that they ſhould make war their only buſineſs, and carry their valour to the utmoſt exceſſes of fanaticiſm. Such alſo will be the features which I ſhall moſt frequently have occaſion to preſent, when I come to give a picture of their manners: there the influence of a doctrine ſo pernicious will be felt in its utmoſt extent. But juſtice obliges me to obſerve here, that the reproach ariſing from it does not affect the ancient inhabitants of the North more, than thoſe of all Europe in general, unleſs it be that they continued to deſerve it longer. However ſtrange to a man who reaſons coolly may appear the madneſs of making war habitually, for the ſake of war itſelf: it muſt notwithſtanding be allowed, that this hath been for a ſucceſſion of ages the favourite paſſion of all thoſe nations at preſent ſo polite; and it is but, as it were, of yeſterday that they began to be ſenſible of the value of peace, of the cultivation of arts, and of a government favourable to induſtry. The farther we look back towards their infancy, the more we ſee them occupied in war, divided among themſelves, cruelly bent on the deſtruction of each other, by a ſpirit of revenge, idleneſs and fanaticiſm. There was a time when the whole face of Europe preſented the ſame ſpectacle as the foreſts of America; viz. a thouſand little wandering

nations,

nations, without cities or towns, or agriculture, or arts; having nothing to ſubſiſt on but a few herds, wild fruits and pillage, harraſſing themſelves inceſſantly by inroads and attacks, ſometimes conquering, ſometimes conquered, often totally overthrown and deſtroyed. The ſame cauſes every where produce the ſame effects: a ſavage life neceſſarily produces cruelty and injuſtice; diſquiet, idleneſs and envy naturally lead to violence, and the deſire of rapine and miſchief. The fear of death is no reſtraint when life has no comfort. What evidently proves the unhappineſs of thoſe nations who live in ſuch a ſtate as this, is the facility with which they throw their lives away. The pleaſure ariſing from property, from ſentiment and knowledge, the fruits of induſtry, laws and arts, by ſoftening life and endearing it to us, can alone give us a reliſh for peace and juſtice.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the exterior worſhip and religious ceremonies of the northern nations.

IN laying open the principal doctrines of the ancient Danes, I have already had frequent occaſion to remark their conformity with thoſe of the other 'Gothic and' Celtic nations of Europe. The ſame conformity is obſervable in the worſhip which they paid the Deity; and one may preſume that it would appear ſtill greater if it were eaſy to purſue with exactneſs, the hiſtory of that religion through its ſeveral ſtages of purity and alteration. Thus, for inſtance, it is eaſy to comprehend why the ancient Danes made uſe of temples; although, on the other hand, it is very certain, that the uſe of them was proſcribed by the primitive religion, which taught that it was offenſive to the gods to pretend to incloſe them within the circuit of walls; and that men thereby checked and reſtrained their action,

which

which is to penetrate all creatures freely in order to ſupport them in being. There was doubtleſs a time, when the Danes, admitting the ſame doctrine, worſhipped their divinities only in open air, and either knew not or approved not of the uſe of temples. Although we want the greateſt part of the monuments which might inſtruct us concerning that ſtage of their religion, the traces of it are not yet entirely deſtroyed. We find at this day here and there in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, in the middle of a plain, or upon ſome little hill, altars, around which they aſſembled to offer ſacrifices and to aſſiſt at other religious ceremonies. The greateſt part of theſe altars are raiſed upon a little hill, either natural or artificial. Three long pieces of rock ſet upright ſerve for baſis to a great flat ſtone, which forms the table of the altar. There is commonly a pretty large cavity under this altar, which might be intended to receive the blood of the victims; and they never fail to find ſtones for ſtriking fire ſcattered round it; for no other fire, but ſuch as was ſtruck forth with a flint, was pure enough for ſo holy a purpoſe. Sometimes theſe rural altars are conſtructed in a more magnificent manner; a double range of enormous ſtones ſurround the altar and the little hill on which it is erected. In

Zealand we ſee one of this kind *; which is formed of ſtones of a prodigious magnitude. Men would even now be afraid to undertake ſuch a work, notwithſtanding all the aſſiſtance of the mechanic powers which in thoſe times they wanted. What redoubles the aſtoniſhment is, that ſtones of that ſize are rarely to be ſeen throughout the iſland, and that they muſt have been brought from a great diſtance. What labour, time and ſweat then muſt have been beſtowed upon theſe vaſt rude monuments, which are unhappily more durable than thoſe of the fine arts? But men in all ages have been perſuaded, that they could not pay greater honour to the Deity, than by making for him (if I may ſo expreſs it) a kind of ſtrong bulwarks; in executing prodigies of labour; in conſecrating to him immenſe riches. The ſacrifice of whatever is vicious in our paſſions, which he only requires of us for our own happineſs, is always the laſt thing that is thought of to offer to him, becauſe it is perhaps what is after all the moſt difficult. At Epheſus they diſplayed their devotion, by laying out upon one ſingle temple all the treaſures of Greece and Aſia. The Goths, whoſe bodily ſtrength was all their riches,

* Vide Olai Wormii Monum. Danic.

ſhewed

ſhewed their zeal by rolling enormous rocks to the ſummits of hills.

In ſome places of Norway, are found grottos, which have alſo been employed for religious uſes. Some of them have been cut with incredible pains in the hardeſt rocks; others are formed of prodigious ſtones brought near and combined together with a force no leſs ſurprizing*.

By degrees, as the Scandinavians formed new intercourſes and connections with the other nations of Europe, whether by the expeditions they undertook, or by the foreign colonies which came to eſtabliſh themſelves among them, their religion, changing by degrees, tolerated inſenſibly temples and idols, and at length adopted them without reſerve. The three principal nations of Scandinavia† vied with each other in erecting temples, but none were more famous than that of Upſal in Sweden. It glittered on all ſides with gold. A chain of the ſame metal (or at leaſt gilded) ran round the roof, although the circumference was not leſs than nine hundred ells. Hacon earl of Norway had built one near Drontheim, which was not inferior to that of Upſal. When Olaus

* Worm. Monum. Danic. lib. i. p. 6.

† Sweden, Denmark, and Norway.

king of Norway introduced the Chriſtian faith into that country, he cauſed this temple to be razed to the ground, and broke to pieces the idols it contained: They found there great riches, and particularly a ring of gold of great value. Iceland had alſo its temples, and the chronicles of that country ſpeak with admiration of two eſpecially, one ſituate in the north of the iſland, the other in the ſouth. In each of theſe temples, " there was," ſays an author of that country *, " a private " chapel, which was regarded as a holy " place: There they placed the idols upon " a kind of altar, around which they " ranged the victims that were to be " offered up. Another altar ſtood oppoſite to it, plated with iron, in order that " the fire which was to burn there perpetually, ſhould not damage it: Upon this " altar was placed a vaſe of braſs, in which " they received the blood of the victims: " Beſide it ſtood a bruſh which they made " uſe of to ſprinkle the blood upon the by-" ſtanders. There hung up likewiſe a " great ſilver ring which they ſtained with " blood, and which whoever took an oath " on any occaſion was required to hold " in his hand. In one of theſe temples,

* Vid. Arngrim. Jon. Crymogæa.

" there

" there was alſo near the chapel a deep " pit or well, into which they caſt the " victims."

When Denmark had embraced the Chriſtian faith, they applied themſelves with as much zeal to deſtroy theſe temples, as they had a little before to ſerve their falſe gods in them. In a ſhort time they were all razed to the ground, and the very remembrance of the places where they ſtood was totally loſt. But the altars that are very often found ſcattered upon the mountains and in the woods, teſtify at this day, that the ancient Danes were not leſs attached to this mode of worſhip than the other northern nations.

All the gods whoſe names I have enumerated, and many others of inferior note, were worſhipped and invoked by the ancient Scandinavians, but not all in the ſame manner, nor on the ſame account. The great temple of Upſal ſeemed to be particularly conſecrated to the three ſuperior deities, and each of them was characterized by ſome particular ſymbol. ODIN was repreſented holding a ſword in his hand: THOR ſtood at the left hand of Odin, with a crown upon his head, a ſceptre in one hand, and a club in the other. Sometimes they painted him on a chariot, drawn by two he-goats of wood,

with a ſilver bridle, and his head ſurrounded with ſtars. FRIGGA ſtood at the left hand of Thor; ſhe was repreſented of both ſexes (as an hermaphrodite) and with divers other attributes, which characterized the goddeſs of pleaſure. Odin was invoked as the god of battles and victory. Thor, as the governor of the ſeaſons, who diſpenſed rains, dry weather and fertility. Frigga as the goddeſs of pleaſures, of love and marriage. I do not here enter into a minute account of the worſhip rendered to the other gods: That which was paid to the three ſuperior deities conſiſted principally in ſacrifices, and deſerves to be deſcribed more at large.

There were three great religious feſtivals in the year. The firſt was celebrated at the winter ſolſtice. They called the night on which it was obſerved, the MOTHER-NIGHT, as that which produced all the reſt: and this epoch was rendered the more remarkable as they dated from thence the beginning of the year, which among the northern nations was computed from one winter ſolſtice to another, as the month was from one new moon to the next. This feaſt which was very conſiderable, was named IUUL *, and

* Hence is derived the old name for Chriſtmas. word YEOL or YULE, Vide Junii Etymolog. [Ang. Sax. Geol,] the Anglican. T.

was

was celebrated in honour of THOR, or the ſun, in order to obtain a propitious year, and fruitful ſeaſons. Sacrifices, feaſting, dances, nocturnal aſſemblies, and all the demonſtrations of a moſt diſſolute joy, were then authorized by the general uſage: Theſe anſwered to the Saturnalia of the Romans, and were in a great meaſure renewed afterwards among the people, on occaſion of the feaſt of Chriſtmas. The ſecond feſtival was inſtituted in honour of the earth, or of the goddeſs GOYA or FRIGGA, to requeſt of her pleaſures, fruitfulneſs, and victory: And it was fixed at the firſt quarter of the ſecond moon of the year. The third, which ſeems to have been the moſt conſiderable in ancient times, was inſtituted in honour of ODIN; it was celebrated at the beginning of the ſpring, in order to welcome in that pleaſant ſeaſon, and eſpecially to obtain of the god of battles happy ſucceſs in their projected expeditions. There were alſo ſome feaſts in honour of the other gods, and they were often multiplied on occaſion of particular events.

In the earlieſt ages the offerings were ſimple, and ſuch as ſhepherds and ruſtics could preſent. They loaded the altars of the gods with the firſt fruits of their crops, and the choiceſt products of the earth: Afterwards they ſacrificed animals. They offered

to Thor, during the feaſt of Iuul, fat oxen and horſes; to Frigga the largeſt hog they could get *; to Odin horſes, dogs, and falcons, ſometimes cocks, and a fat bull. When they had once laid it down as a principle that the effuſion of the blood of theſe animals appeaſed the anger of the gods, and that their juſtice turned aſide upon the victims thoſe ſtrokes which were deſtined for men; their great care then was for nothing more than to conciliate their favour by ſo eaſy a method. It is the nature of violent deſires and exceſſive fear to know no bounds, and therefore when they would aſk for any favour which they ardently wiſhed for, or would deprecate ſome public calamity which they feared, the blood of animals was not deemed a price ſufficient, but they began to ſhed that of men. It is probable that this barbarous practice was formerly almoſt univerſal, and that it is of a very remote antiquity: It was not entirely aboliſhed among the northern nations till towards the ninth century, becauſe before that time they had not received the light of the goſpel, and were ignorant of thoſe arts which had ſoftened

* *Matrem Deûm venerantur Æſtii: inſigne ſuperſtitionis, formas aprorum geſtant.* Tacit. Germ. c. 45.

the ferocity of the Romans and Greeks whilſt they were ſtill pagans.

The appointed time for theſe ſacrifices was always determined by another ſuperſtitious opinion which made the northern nations regard the number THREE as ſacred and particularly dear to the gods. Thus in every ninth month they renewed this bloody ceremony, which was to laſt nine days, and every day they offered up nine living victims whether men or animals. But the moſt ſolemn ſacrifices were thoſe which were offered at Upſal in Sweden every ninth year. Then the king, the ſenate, and all the citizens of any diſtinction, were obliged to appear in perſon, and to bring offerings, which were placed in the great temple deſcribed above. Thoſe who could not come themſelves, ſent their preſents by others, or paid the value in money to prieſts whoſe buſineſs it was to receive the offerings. Strangers flocked there in crowds from all parts; and none were excluded except thoſe whoſe honour had ſuffered ſome ſtain, and eſpecially ſuch as had been accuſed of cowardice. Then they choſe among the captives in time of war, and among the ſlaves in time of peace, nine perſons to be ſacrificed: The choice was partly regulated by the opinion of the byſtanders, and partly by lot. The wretches upon

whom the lot fell, were treated with ſuch honours by all the aſſembly, they were ſo overwhelmed with careſſes for the preſent, and with promiſes for the life to come, that they ſometimes congratulated themſelves on their deſtiny. But they did not always ſacrifice ſuch mean perſons: In great calamities, in a preſſing famine for example, if the people thought they had ſome pretext to impute the cauſe of it to their king, they even ſacrificed him without heſitation, as the higheſt price with which they could purchaſe the divine favour. In this manner the firſt king * of VERMLAND was burnt in honour of Odin to put an end to a great dearth; as we read in the hiſtory of Norway. The kings, in their turn, did not ſpare the blood of their ſubjects; and many of them even ſhed that of their children. Hacon, king of Norway, offered his ſon in ſacrifice, to obtain of Odin the victory over his enemy Harald †. Aune, king of Sweden, devoted to Odin the blood of his nine ſons, to prevail on that god to prolong his life ‡. The ancient hiſtory of the North abounds in ſi-

* This was a petty king of a province of Sweden. See Wormius, in Monum. Dan. p. 25, 26.

† Saxo Grammat. lib. x.

‡ Worm. Monum. Danic. lib. i. p. 28.

milar

milar examples. Theſe abominable ſacrifices were accompanied with various ceremonies. When the victim was choſen, they conducted him towards the altar where the ſacred fire was kept burning night and day: It was ſurrounded with all ſorts of iron and brazen veſſels: Among them one was diſtinguiſhed from the reſt by its ſuperior ſize; in this they received the blood of the victims. When they offered up animals, they ſpeedily killed them at the foot of the altar; then they opened their entrails to draw auguries from them, as among the Romans; afterwards they dreſſed the fleſh to be ſerved up in a feaſt prepared for the aſſembly. Even horſe-fleſh was not rejected, and the grandees often eat of it as well as the people. But when they were diſpoſed to ſacrifice men, thoſe whom they pitched upon were laid upon a great ſtone, where they were inſtantly either ſtrangled or knocked on the head. Sometimes they let out the blood; for no preſage was more reſpected than that which they drew from the greater or leſs degree of impetuoſity with which the blood guſhed forth. Hence the prieſts inferred what ſucceſs would attend the enterprize which was the object of their ſacrifice. They alſo opened the body to read in the entrails, and eſpecially in the heart, the will of the

gods, and the good or ill fortune that was impending. The bodies were afterwards burnt, or ſuſpended in a ſacred grove near the temple. Part of the blood was ſprinkled upon the people, part of it upon the ſacred grove; with the ſame they alſo bedewed the images of the gods, the altars, the benches and walls of the temple both within and without.

Sometimes theſe ſacrifices were performed in another manner*. There was a deep well in the neighbourhood of the temple: The choſen perſon was thrown headlong in; commonly in honour of GOYA or the EARTH. If he went at once to the bottom, the victim had proved agreeable to the goddeſs, and ſhe had received it; If it ſwam a long time upon the ſurface, ſhe refuſed it, and it was hung up in a ſacred foreſt. Near the temple of Upſal, there was a grove of this ſort, of which every tree and every leaf was regarded as the moſt ſacred thing in the world. This, which was named ODIN's GROVE, was full of the bodies of men and animals who had been ſacrificed. They afterwards took them down to burn them in honour of Thor or the ſun: And they had no doubt that the holocauſt had proved agreeable, when the

* See Arngrim. Jonas in Crymogæa. lib. i.

ſmoke

ſmoke aſcended very high. In whatever manner they immolated men, the prieſt always took care in conſecrating the victim to pronounce certain words, as, "I devote "thee to Odin." "I ſend thee to Odin." Or, "I devote thee for a good harveſt; "for the return of a fruitful ſeaſon." The ceremony concluded with feaſtings, in which they diſplayed all the magnificence known in thoſe times. They drank immoderately; the kings and chief lords drank firſt, healths in honour of the gods: Every one drank afterwards, making ſome vow or prayer to the god whom they named. Hence came that cuſtom among the firſt Chriſtians in Germany and the North, of drinking to the health of our Saviour, the apoſtles, and the ſaints; A cuſtom which the church was often obliged to tolerate. The licentiouſneſs of theſe feaſts at length increaſed to ſuch a pitch, as to become mere bacchanalian meetings, where, to the ſound of barbarous muſic, amidſt ſhouts, dancing and indecent geſtures, ſo many unſeemly actions were committed, that the wiſeſt men refuſed to aſſiſt at them.

The ſame kinds of ſacrifices were offered, though perhaps with leſs ſplendor, in Denmark, Norway and Iceland. Let us hear on this ſubject an hiſtorian of the

eleventh century, Dithmar biſhop of Merſeburg *. "There is," ſays he, "in Zealand a place which is the capital of "Denmark, named Lederun (this is now "Lethra or Leyre, of which I ſhall ſpeak "hereafter). At this place, every nine "years, in the month of January, the "Danes flock together in crowds, and "offer to their gods ninety nine men, as "many horſes, dogs and cocks, with the "certain hope of appeaſing the gods by "theſe victims." Dudo of St. Quentin, a French hiſtorian, attributes the ſame practice to the Normans or Norwegians †: But he informs us, that it was in honour of Thor that theſe ſacrifices were made. Arngrim Jonas, an Icelandic author who hath writ with great learning upon the antiquities of his nation ‡, remarks, that there were formerly in Iceland, two temples in which they offered up human victims, and a famous pit or well in which they were thrown headlong. There are ſtill in Friezland, and in ſeveral places of Germany, altars compoſed of ſuch large ſtones that they could neither be deſtroyed by the ravages of time, nor by the zeal of

* Dithm. Merſeburg. Chronic. lib. i. p. 12.

† Dudo Quint. ſub init.

‡ J. Arngr. Crymog. lib. i. c. 7.

the

the firſt converts to Chriſtianity. Theſe altars, according to the tradition of the inhabitants, and the reports of creditable hiſtorians, have ſerved for the ſame horrid purpoſes *. The Gauls for a long time offered men to their ſupreme god Esus, or Tevtat †. The firſt inhabitants of Italy, and Sicily, the Britons, the Phenicians, the Carthaginians, and all the nations we know of in Europe and Aſia, have been covered with the ſame reproach. And can we wonder at it? Every nation buried in ignorance muſt inevitably fall into error, and from thence into fanaticiſm and cruelty. Men are born ſurrounded with dangers and evils, at the ſame time that they are weak and naked. If, as they grow up to manhood, the arts of civil life and the ſecurity of laws do not diſperſe their fears, ſoften their diſpoſitions, and diffuſe through their minds, calmneſs moderation and the ſocial affections, they become a prey to a thouſand gloomy terrors, which paint out all nature to them as full of dangers and enemies, and keep them perpetually armed with ferocity and diſtruſt. Hence that thirſt of revenge and deſtruction which barbarous nations cannot lay aſide:

* Ubbo Emmius Hiſt. Friſ. lib. i. p. 21.

† This our Author thinks was the ſame as Odin. T.

Hence that impious prejudice which makes them imagine the gods to be as ſanguinary as themſelves. It is the unhappineſs of our nature, that ignorance ſuggeſts fear, and fear cruelty. They muſt therefore be very little acquainted with human nature, and ſtill leſs ſo with hiſtory, who place the golden age of any people in the age of its poverty and ignorance. It is ſo true that men are every where alike in this reſpect, that nations who have never had any commerce with thoſe of Europe, have run into the ſame exceſſes with equal fury. The Peruvians anciently offered human ſacrifices. The Mexicans once offered up to their gods, upon one ſingle occaſion, five thouſand priſoners of war. Multitudes of people, half-unknown and wandering in the deſerts of Afric or foreſts of America, do to this day deſtroy each other, from the ſame principles and with the ſame blind fury.

The prieſts of theſe inhuman Gods were called DROTTES, a name which probably anſwers to the Gallic word DRUIDS: They were alſo frequently ſtyled Prophets, Wiſe Men, Divine Men. At Upſal each of the three ſuperior deities had their reſpective prieſts, the principal of whom to the number of twelve, preſided over the ſacrifices, and exerciſed an unlimited authority

thority over every thing which ſeemed to have connection with religion. The reſpect ſhown them was ſuitable to this authority. Sprung for the moſt part from the ſame family*, like thoſe of the Jews, they perſuaded the people that this family had God himſelf for its founder. They often united the prieſthood and the ſovereignty in their own perſons, after the example of Odin their legiſlator. And it was in conſequence of that cuſtom that in later times kings ſtill performed ſome functions of the prieſthood, or ſet apart their children for an office ſo highly revered. The goddeſs Frigga was uſually ſerved by kings daughters whom they called PROPHETESSES and GODDESSES; theſe pronounced oracles, devoted themſelves to perpetual virginity, and kept up the ſacred fire in her temple. Tacitus informs us, that among the Germans the power of inflicting pains and penalties, of ſtriking, and binding a criminal was veſted in the prieſts alone. And theſe men ſo haughty, who thought themſelves diſhonoured if they did not revenge the ſlighteſt offence, would trembling ſubmit to blows and even death itſelf from

* Among the northern nations, ſays Diodorus Siculus, a family is charged (from father to ſon) with the care of the temples, and the worſhip of the gods. Hiſt. lib. ii. c. 47.

the hand of the pontiff, whom they took for the inſtrument of an angry deity *. In ſhort, the credulity of the people, and the craft and preſumption of the prieſt went ſo far, that theſe pretended interpreters of the Divine Will dared even to demand, in the name of heaven, the blood of kings themſelves; and they obtained it. To ſucceed in this, it was only requiſite for them to avail themſelves of thoſe times of calamity, when the people, diſtracted with ſorrow and fear, lay their minds open to the moſt horrid impreſſions. At thoſe times, while the prince was ſlaughtered at one of the altars of the gods; the others were covered with offerings, which were heaped up on all ſides for their miniſters.

I have already obſerved, that the ancient religion of the northern nations † made the deity to interpoſe in the moſt indifferent events, as well as the moſt conſiderable; and they only conſidered the elements, as ſo many organs by which he manifeſted his will and his reſolves. This opinion once admitted, intereſt or ſuperſtition quickly drew from thence a conſequence natural enough: namely, that by ſtudying

* *Neque animadvertere, neque vincire, neque verberare niſi ſacerdotibus permiſſum, non ducis juſſu, ſed velut Deo imperante.* Tacit. Germ.

† Celtic nations. Orig.

with

with care the phænomena of nature, or, to ſpeak in the ſpirit of that religion, the viſible actions of that unſeen deity, men might come to know his will, inclinations, and deſires; in one word, they entered into a kind of commerce with him; oracles, auguries, divinations, and a thouſand practices of that kind quickly ſprung up in crowds, from this erroneous principle. Accordingly in all our ancient fables and chronicles, we ſee the northern nations extremely attached to this vain ſcience. They had oracles like the people of Italy and Greece, and theſe oracles were not leſs revered, nor leſs famous than theirs. It was generally believed either that the gods and goddeſſes, or, more commonly, that the three deſtinies whoſe names I have given elſewhere, delivered out theſe oracles in their temples. That of Upſal was as famous for its oracles as its ſacrifices. There were alſo celebrated ones in Dalia, a province of Sweden; in Norway and Denmark. "It "was," ſays Saxo the Grammarian, "a "cuſtom with the ancient Danes to con- "ſult the oracles of the Parcæ, concerning "the future deſtiny of children newly "born. Accordingly Fridleif being de- "ſirous to know that of his ſon Olaus, "entered into the temple of the gods to "pray; and being introduced into the

" ſanctuary, he ſaw three goddeſſes upon " ſo many ſeats. The firſt, who was of a " beneficent nature, granted the infant " beauty and the gift of pleaſing. The " ſecond gave him a noble heart. But " the third, who was envious and ſpiteful, " to ſpoil the work of her ſiſters, im- " printed on him the ſtain of covetouſneſs." It ſhould ſeem that the idols or ſtatues themſelves of the gods and goddeſſes delivered theſe oracles *vivâ voce*. In an ancient Icelandic chronicle we read of one Indrid, who went from home to wait for Thorſtein his enemy. " Thorſtein," ſays the author, " upon his arrival, entered into " the temple. In it was a ſtone (cut pro- " bably into a ſtatue) which he had been " accuſtomed to worſhip; he proſtrated " himſelf before it, and prayed to it (to " inform him of his deſtiny). Indrid, " who ſtood without, heard the ſtone " chaunt forth theſe verſes. " It is for the " laſt time, it is with feet drawing near " to the grave, that thou art come to this " place: For it is moſt certain, that before " the ſun ariſeth, the valiant Indrid ſhall " make thee feel his hatred *." The people perſuaded themſelves ſometimes that theſe idols anſwered by a geſture or a nod

* Holmveria ſaga apud Bartholin. lib. iii. c. 11.

of

of the head, which ſignified that they hearkened to the prayers of their ſupplicants. Thus in the hiſtory of Olave Tryggeſon king of Norway, we ſee a lord named Hacon, who enters into a temple, and proſtrates himſelf before an idol which held in its hand a great bracelet of gold. Hacon, adds the hiſtorian, eaſily conceiving, that ſo long as the idol would not part with the bracelet, it was not diſpoſed to be reconciled to him, and having made ſome fruitleſs efforts to take the bracelet away, began to pray afreſh, and to offer it preſents: then getting up a ſecond time, the idol looſed the bracelet, and he went away very well pleaſed. I ſhall not loſe time in entering into a deſcription of the other kinds of Oracles. Enough has been ſaid to convince the diſcerning reader, that here was the ſame credulity on the one ſide, and the ſame impoſture on the other, as had formerly procured credit to the oracles of Greece and Aſia. There is no eſſential difference between thoſe of the two countries, though ſo far diſtant from each other. If the luxury of the ſouthern nations ſet theirs off with more pomp and magnificence than comported with the ſimplicity of the rude inhabitants of the North, the latter had no leſs veneration and attachment to their own oracles, than they. It has

been thought to be no leſs for the intereſt of religion to attribute theſe of the North to the artifices of the devil, than the others, as well as the pretended ſcience of magic, of which the North has paſt ſo long for the moſt celebrated ſchool and peculiar country. It is true that men have not advanced on the ſubject of the northern oracles, as they have done with reſpect to thoſe of the ſouth, that they ceaſed at the birth of Chriſt *, although the aſſertion is as true, of the one as the other: But for want of this proof, an ill-grounded zeal hath found plenty of others; as if the advantages reſulting from true religion were leſs important, or our gratitude leſs due, becauſe the evils from which it hath delivered mankind, did not proceed from ſupernatural cauſes.

Oracles were not the only efforts made by the curioſity of the Scandinavians to penetrate into futurity, nor the only relief impoſture afforded them. They had diviners both male and female, honoured with the name of prophets, and revered as if they

* Pope Gregory writing to the Saxons newly converted, ſays, *Falſidica numina in quibus dæmones habitare noſcuntur---Oro ut ſint a diabolicâ fraude liberati, &c. &c.* Ex Epiſt. Bonifac. a Serar. Mogunt. in 4 edit.—Nothing was more common at that time than this ſort of language.

had

had been ſuch. Some of them were ſaid to have familiar ſpirits, who never left them, and whom they conſulted under the form of little idols: Others dragged the ghoſts of the departed from their tombs, and forced the dead to tell them what would happen. Of this laſt ſort was Odin himſelf, who often called up the ſouls of the deceaſed, to know what paſſed in diſtant countries. There is ſtill extant a very ancient Icelandic ode upon a ſubject of this kind *; wherein the poet repreſents, in very ſtrong imagery, Odin as deſcending to the infernal regions, and calling up from thence a celebrated propheteſs. Poetry was often employed for the like abſurd purpoſes, and thoſe ſame SCALDS or bards, who as we ſhall ſee hereafter enjoyed ſuch credit among the living, boaſted a power of diſturbing the repoſe of the dead, and of dragging them ſpite of their teeth out of their gloomy abodes, by force of certain ſongs which they knew how to compoſe. The ſame ignorance, which made poetry be regarded as ſomething ſupernatural, perſuaded them alſo that the letters or RUNIC characters, which were then uſed by the few who were able to write and

* This the reader will find tranſlated in the ſecond part of this work.

read, included in them certain myſterious and magical properties. Impoſtors then eaſily perſuaded a credulous people, that theſe letters, diſpoſed and combined after a certain manner, were able to work wonders, and in particular to preſage future events. It is ſaid, that Odin, who was the inventor of thoſe characters, knew by their means how to raiſe the dead. There were letters, or RUNES, to procure victory, to preſerve from poiſon, to relieve women in labour, to cure bodily diſeaſes, to diſpel evil thoughts from the mind, to diſſipate melancholy, and to ſoften the ſeverity of a cruel miſtreſs. They employed pretty nearly the ſame characters for all theſe different purpoſes, but they varied the order and combination of the letters: They wrote them either from right to left, or from top to bottom, or in form of a circle, or contrary to the courſe of the ſun, &c. In this principally conſiſted that puerile and ridiculous art, as little underſtood probably by thoſe who profeſſed it, as it was diſtruſted by thoſe who had recourſe to it.

I have already remarked, that they had often no other end in ſacrificing human victims, than to know what was to happen by inſpection of their entrails, by the effuſion of their blood, and by the greater or leſs degree of celerity with which they ſunk to the

the bottom of the water. The ſame motive engaged them to lend an attentive ear to the ſinging of birds, which ſome diviners boaſted a power of interpreting. The ancient hiſtory of Scandinavia is as full of theſe ſuperſtitious practices, as that of Rome itſelf. We ſee in Saxo Grammaticus, as in Livy, auguries which forebode the ſucceſs of an expedition, warriors who are ſtruck by unexpected preſages, lots conſulted, days regarded as favourable or unlucky, female diviners who follow the armies, ſhowers of blood, forebodings, wonderful dreams which the event never fails to juſtify, and the ſlighteſt circumſtances of the moſt important actions taken for good or bad omens. This hath been, we well know, a general and inveterate diſeaſe in human nature, of which it hath only begun to be cured in Europe. To recall to view a ſpectacle, which tends ſo much to mortify and humble us, would be a labour as uſeleſs as diſcouraging to an hiſtorian, if the knowledge of all theſe practices did not make an eſſential part of that of Manners and of the cauſes of events, without which there could be no hiſtory; and alſo if the ſketch of the errors and miſtakes of human reaſon did not convincingly prove to us the neceſſity of cultivating it. A perſon endued with natural good ſenſe will alſo find by this

means remedies proper to cure whatever remains of ſuch weakneſs and credulity hang about him. It is true, one cannot always refute the marvellous and ſupernatural ſtories of ancient hiſtorians, by the bare circumſtances of their relations; becauſe, beſides that it would be endleſs to enter continually upon ſuch diſcuſſions, we often want the pieces neceſſary to enable us to make all the reſearches ſuch an examination would require. But what needs there more to convince us that we have a right to reject, without exception, all facts of this kind, than to conſider, on the one hand, how ignorant the vulgar are even in our days, how credulous, how eaſy to be impoſed on, and to be even the dupes of their own fancy, greedy of the marvellous, inclined to exaggeration, and precipitant in their judgments: And, on the other hand, that among thoſe nations whoſe hiſtory appears ſo aſtoniſhing at preſent, for a long time all were vulgar, except perhaps a few obſcure ſages, whoſe voice was too feeble to be heard amid the clamours of ſo many blind and prejudiced perſons? Is it not ſufficient to conſider further, that the age of the greateſt ignorance of ſuch nations is preciſely that which hath been moſt fruitful of oracles, divinations, prophetic dreams, apparitions, and other prodigies

of

of that kind? that they appear more ſeldom in proportion as they are leſs believed? and finally, that the experience of our own times ſhows us, that wherever reaſon is brought to the greateſt perfection, all things fall into the order of natural and ſimple events, inſomuch that the loweſt and meaneſt claſs of men accuſtom themſelves to believe nothing which is not agreeable to good ſenſe and accompanied with ſome probability.

But I repeat it once more, that ſuperſtition did not blind all the ancient Scandinavians without exception: And hiſtory teſtifies, that there were, after all, among them men wiſe enough to diſcover the folly of the received opinions, and courageous enough to condemn them without reſerve. In the hiſtory of Olave * king of Norway, a warrior fears not to ſay publickly, that he relies much more on his own ſtrength and on his arms, than upon Thor or Odin. Another, in the ſame book, ſpeaks thus to his friend. "I would have "thee know, that I believe neither in "idols nor ſpirits. I have travelled in "many places; I have met with giants "and monſtrous men: they could never

* Or Olaus ſurnamed Trygueſon. Vid. Bartholin. de Cauſis, &c. p. 80.

" overcome me; thus to this preſent hour " my own force and courage are the ſole " objects of my belief." Unluckily there ſeems too much room to ſuſpect that this contempt of ſuperſtition did but throw them for the moſt part into the oppoſite extreme. So true is it that we ſeldom are able to obſerve a juſt medium. At leaſt, many of the northern warriors ſeem to have been ſo intoxicated with their courage as to eſteem themſelves independent beings, who had nothing to aſk or fear from the gods. In an Icelandic chronicle, a vain-glorious perſon makes his boaſt to a Chriſtian miſſionary, that he had never yet acknowledged any religion, and that his own ſtrength and abilities were every thing to him. For the ſame reaſon, others refuſed to ſacrifice to the gods of whom they had no need. St. Olave king of Norway demanding of a warrior, who offered him his ſervices, what religion he profeſſed; the warrior anſwered, " I am neither Chriſtian nor " Pagan; my companions and I have no " other religion, than the confidence in " our own ſtrength; and in the good ſuc- " ceſs which always attends us in war; " and we are of opinion, it is all that is " neceſſary." The ſame thing is related of ROLF ſurnamed KRACK, king of Denmark;

mark; one day when one of his companions propoſed to offer a ſacrifice to Odin, he ſaid that he feared nothing from that bluſtering ſpirit, and that he ſhould never ſtand in awe of him. But as it was not always kings who durſt manifeſt ſentiments ſo bold and hardy, the followers of the prevailing religion ſometimes puniſhed theſe irreligious perſons. In the life of king Olave Tryggeſon, mention is made of a man who was condemned to exile for having ſung in a public place, verſes, the ſenſe of which was to this purpoſe. "I will "not inſult or affront the gods: Never"theleſs, the goddeſs Freya inſpires me "with no reſpect: It muſt certainly be "that either ſhe or Odin are chimerical "deities." It is eaſy to conceive how much, natural good ſenſe, ſupported by that confidence which bodily ſtrength inſpires, could excite in thoſe ancient warriors contempt for their mute and feeble deities, and for the childiſh or troubleſome rites in their worſhip. But beſides this, it is certain, as I have already obſerved, that the Scythian religion, in its original purity, admitted only a ſimple and reaſonable worſhip, and one ſole, principal Deity, who was inviſible and almighty. One may then ſuppoſe, with a good deal of likelihood, that this religion was not

by length of time ſo much defaced, but that ſome traces of it ſtill remained in the memory of ſenſible perſons, and in the ſoundeſt part of the nation. Indeed we ſee appear at intervals, in the ancient Scandinavia, ſome men of this ſtamp endued with a real ſtrength of mind, who not only trampled under foot all the objects of the credulity and idle ſuperſtition of the multitude, (an effort which pride renders eaſy, and ſometimes alone produces) but who even raiſed their minds to the inviſible maſter of every thing we ſee; "the father of the ſun, and "of all nature." In an Icelandic chronicle, a perſon named GIEST ſays to his nephew, who is juſt ready to embark for Groenland *: "I beſeech, and conjure "him who made the ſun, to give ſucceſs "to thy undertaking." A celebrated Norwegian warrior, named THORSTEIN, ſays, ſpeaking of his father, "He will receive "upon this account a recompence from "him, who made the heaven and the "univerſe, whoever he be:" And, upon another occaſion, he makes a vow to the ſame being, "who made the ſun," for, adds he, "his power muſt needs have been "exceſſive to produce ſuch a work." All his family entertained the ſame ſentiments,

* Vatzdæla. apud Barthol. c. 6. lib. i. p. 83.

and

and it is expreſsly noted in many places of the ſame chronicle, that it was their religion to believe in him "who was creator of the ſun." TORCHILL, a ſupreme judge of Iceland, a man of unblemiſhed life, and diſtinguiſhed among the wiſeſt magiſtrates of that iſland during the time that it was governed in form of a republic, ſeeing his end draw near, ordered himſelf to be ſet in the open air, with his face turned towards the ſun, and having reſted there ſome moments in a kind of extacy, expired, recommending his ſoul to HIM among the gods, who had created the ſun and the ſtars *. But of all the ſtrokes of this kind, none is more remarkable than what a modern Icelandic hiſtorian relates in his manuſcript-ſupplement to the hiſtory of Norway. Harold Harfax, the firſt king of all Norway, ſays this author, being yet but young, held the following diſcourſe in a popular aſſembly. "I "ſwear and proteſt in the moſt ſacred "manner, that I will never offer ſacrifice "to any of the gods adored by the people, "but to him only, who hath formed this "world, and every thing we behold in it." Harold lived in the middle of the ninth century, at a time when the Chriſtian religion had not yet penetrated into Norway.

* Arn. Jon. Crymog. lib. i. c. 6.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the form of government which formerly prevailed in the North.

THE character of the ancient northern nations is, in ſome meaſure, laid open in the former book. It is the nature of every religion which is the handy-work of men, always to carry marks of the weakneſs of its authors, and to breathe forth the ſame ſpirit, with which they themſelves were animated. Their government and laws are another faithful mirrour, wherein that ſpirit may be ſeen with no leſs advantage. It is obvious, that the laws cannot long be contrary to the genius of a nation. Sooner or later they will be impreſſed with its character, or they will give it theirs. Theſe are two ſtreams very different in their ſources, but which as ſoon as they unite in the ſame channel, have but one force and one direction. The importance of this ſubject makes it incumbent on me to treat it with ſome extent, and to bring together

together with the utmoſt care all the feeble and ſcattered rays, which throw any light upon it amid the obſcurity of ſo many dark ages.

In the firſt place, let us conſult Tacitus, that excellent hiſtorian of ancient Germany, who in his little compendious narrative, hath given in a few pages a moſt ſtriking picture of the inhabitants of this vaſt country. It is needleſs to repeat here what is known to all who have read his treatiſe concerning Germany, that he comprehended under this name all Scandinavia; and whatever he ſays of the former equally regards the latter. His words ought to be given here intire, and weighed with care. Among this people, he ſays, "the chiefs, or princes *, determine ſome "affairs of leſs importance; all the reſt "are reſerved for the general aſſembly: "Yet even theſe the deciſion of which is "veſted in the people, are beforehand "diſcuſſed by the chiefs. . . . . "At theſe aſſemblies they take their ſeats "all of them armed. Silence is com-"manded by the prieſts, whoſe buſineſs it

* *De minoribus rebus* PRINCIPES *conſultant; de majoribus* OMNES. Tacit. Germ. c. 11, 12, 13, 14, *&c.*

" is at ſuch times to maintain order. Then " the king or chief ſpeaks firſt; afterwards " the great men are heard in their turns " with that attention which is due to their " age, to their nobility, their reputation in " war, their eloquence; greater deference " being paid to their power of perſuaſion, " than to their perſonal authority. If " their advice diſpleaſes, the people reject " it with a general murmur: If it is ap- " proved of, they claſh their lances †. It " is the moſt honourable way of expreſſing " their aſſent, or of conferring praiſe, to do " it by their arms. . . . Criminal cauſes " may alſo be brought before this great coun- " cil of the nation. . . . In the ſame aſ- " ſemblies are elected the chiefs or princes, " whoſe buſineſs it is to diſtribute juſtice " thro' the towns and villages. To each of " theſe are joined a hundred aſſeſſors cho- " ſen out of the people, who aſſiſt the chief " with their advice and authority. . . . . " * The kings are choſen for their no- " ble birth; the leaders or generals for " their perſonal valour. The power of " the kings is not arbitrary, but limited.

† *Frameas concutiunt.* Tacit.

* REGES *ex nobilitate*; DUCES *ex virtute ſumunt.* Tacit. c. 7.

" The

" The leaders are not ſo much to give or-
" ders, as examples: They muſt ſignalize
" themſelves by their courage and activity,
" and their authority muſt be founded on
" eſteem and admiration. . . . . Extreme
" youth does not exclude from the rank of
" prince or chief, thoſe, whom their noble
" birth, or the diſtinguiſhed merit of their
" fathers intitle to this dignity. As they
" advance in age and acquire eſteem, other
" young warriors attach themſelves to
" them and ſwell their retinue. Nor does
" any one bluſh to be ſeen among theſe
" ATTENDANTS or FOLLOWERS †. Yet
" they have different degrees of rank,
" which are regulated by the chief's own
" judgment. Among the followers is
" great emulation, who ſhall ſtand higheſt
" in the chief's or prince's favour: Among
" the princes, who ſhall have the moſt nu-
" merous and valiant attendants. This is
" their dignity, their ſtrength, to be always
" ſurrounded with a body of choſen youths:
" This is their glory in peace; their ſecu-
" rity in war. And not only in their own
" nation, but among neighbouring ſtates,
" they acquire a name and reputation, in

† *Nec rubor inter* COMITES *aſpici.* Tac.

" proportion to the number and valour of
" their attendants. Then is their friendſhip
" ſought after by embaſſies, and cultivated
" by preſents. . . . . In battle, it would
" be a diſgrace to the chief to be excelled
" in courage by any of his followers: A
" diſgrace to his followers not to equal
" their chief. Should he periſh, they
" would be expoſed to the higheſt infamy
" through life if they ſhould ſurvive him,
" and eſcape from battle. . . . . The
" chiefs fight for victory: They for their
" chief. . . . . To retain their followers
" in their ſervice, no prince or chief hath
" any other reſource but war. They re-
" quire of him one while a horſe trained
" for war: One while a victorious and
" bloody lance. His table rudely ſerved,
" but with great abundance, ſerves them
" inſtead of pay."

All the moſt diſtinguiſhed circumſtances which characterize the ancient Gothic form of government, are contained in this remarkable paſſage. Here we ſee Kings, who owe their advancement to an illuſtrious extraction, preſiding, rather than ruling, over a free people. Here we ſee the Nation aſſembling at certain ſtated times, and making reſolutions in their own perſons on all affairs of importance, as to enact laws,

to chuſe peace or war, to conclude alliances, to diſtribute juſtice in the laſt reſort, and to elect magiſtrates. Here alſo we diſtinguiſh a body of the Grandees or Chiefs of the nation, who prepare and propoſe the important matters, the deciſion of which is reſerved for the general aſſembly of all the free men: That is, we trace here the firſt lineaments, if I may ſo ſay, of what was afterwards named in different countries, "The council of the nation," "The ſe-"nate," "The houſe of peers," &c. Here we diſcover the origin of that ſingular cuſtom, of having an elective General, under an hereditary King: a cuſtom received among moſt of the nations of German extraction, who had either Mayors of the Palace, or Grand Marſhals, or Conſtables, or Counts: For all theſe different names only expreſſed the ſame thing in different countries. Laſtly, if we examine with attention the words of Tacitus, we cannot doubt but Vaſſalage and the Feudal Tenure had already taken footing among this people before ever they left their native foreſts. For although perhaps they did not in thoſe early times give lands in fee, and although their Fees or Fiefs were then perhaps nothing but arms, war-horſes, and banquets; what we read of the reciprocal engagements between the Princes or

Chiefs and their Followers, evidently contains whatever was eſſential to the nature of Vaſſalage, and all the changes which were afterwards made in it were only ſlight and accidental, occaſioned by the conqueſts and new eſtabliſhments, which followed from it.

If we conſider after this, the character of theſe nations, as it is ſketched out by Tacitus, we ſhall not be ſurprized to ſee them wedded to inſtitutions which they found ſo ſuitable to their ſituation and temper: For being the moſt free and warlike people upon earth, they muſt have had a natural averſion to the authority of a ſingle perſon; and if they placed themſelves under leaders, it was only becauſe war cannot be conducted in any other form. As free men, they would only obey from choice, and be leſs influenced by perſonal authority than by reaſon: As warriors, they conceived no other duty to be owing to a prince, than to be ready to ſhed their blood for his cauſe.

But how came theſe men to preſerve themſelves in ſo great a degree of liberty? This was owing to their climate and manner of life, which gave them ſuch ſtrength of body and mind as rendered them capable of long and painful labours, of great and daring exploits. "Accordingly we

" have ſince found liberty to prevail in North " America : But not in the South*." For the bodily ſtrength of the northern warriors kept up in them that courage, that opinion of their own valour, that impatience of affronts and injuries, which makes men hate all arbitrary government and deſpiſe thoſe who ſubmit to it. Being leſs ſenſible of pain than the more ſouthern nations, leſs eaſily moved by the bait of pleaſure, leſs ſuſceptible of thoſe paſſions which ſhake the ſoul too violently, and weaken it by making it dependent on another's will, they were the leſs a prey to ambition, which flatters and intimidates by turns, in order to gain the aſcendant : Their imagination more conſtant than lively, their conception more ſteady than quick, naturally reſiſting novelties, kept them from falling into thoſe ſnares, out of which they would not have known how to eſcape.

They were free, becauſe they inhabited an uncultivated country, rude foreſts and mountains ; and liberty is the ſole treaſure of an indigent people : for a poor country excites no avidity, and he who poſſeſſes little, defends it eaſily. They were free, becauſe they were ignorant of thoſe pleaſures, often ſo dearly bought, which render

* Monteſquieu. L'Eſprit des Loix. Tom. 2.

the protection of a powerful maſter neceſſary. They were free, becauſe hunters and ſhepherds, who wander about in woods through inclination or neceſſity, are not ſo eaſily oppreſſed as the timorous inhabitants of incloſed towns, who are there chained down to the fate of their houſes: and becauſe a wandering people, if deprived of their liberty in one place, eaſily find it in another, as well as their ſubſiſtence. Laſtly, they were free, becauſe knowing not the uſe of money, there could not be employed againſt them that inſtrument of ſlavery and corruption, which enables the ambitious to collect and diſtribute at will the ſigns of riches.

Further, that ſpirit of liberty, ariſing from their climate, and from their ruſtic and military life, had received new ſtrength from the opinions it had produced; as a ſucker which ſhoots forth from the root of a tree, ſtrengthens by embracing it. In effect, theſe people, eſteeming beyond all things, the right of revenging an affront, the glory of deſpiſing death and periſhing ſword in hand, were always ready to attack tyranny in the firſt who dared to attempt it, and in whatever formidable ſhape it appeared.

By theſe means was liberty preſerved among the inhabitants of Germany and the North,

North, as it were in the bud, ready to bloſſom and expand through all Europe, there to flouriſh in their ſeveral colonies. This powerful principle exerted the more ſtrength in proportion as it was the more preſſed, and the whole power of Rome having been unable to deſtroy it, it made that yield in its turn from the time it began to be enfeebled till it was entirely overturned. Indeed there was ſcarce a moment wherein theſe two oppoſite powers preſerved an even ballance. As ſoon as ever that of Rome ceaſed to be ſuperior, it was deſtroyed. Its celebrated name, that name which had been ſo long its ſupport, was only a ſignal of vengeance, which ſerved as it were to rally and aſſemble at the ſame inſtant all the northern nations: And immediately all theſe people breaking forth as it were by agreement, overturned this unhappy empire, and formed out of its ruins limited monarchies; ſtates not leſs known before by name, than by their form of government.

In effect, we every where ſee in thoſe ſwarms of Germans and Scandinavians, a troop of ſavage warriors who ſeem only born for ravage and deſtruction, changed into a ſenſible and free people as ſoon as ever they had confirmed their conqueſts; impregnating (if I may ſo ſay) their inſti-

tutions with a ſpirit of order and equality; electing for their kings ſuch of their princes of the blood royal as they judged moſt worthy to wear the crown; dividing between thoſe kings and the whole nation the exerciſe of the ſovereign power; reſerving to the general aſſemblies the right of making laws, and deciding important matters; and laſtly, to give a ſolid ſupport to the powers immediately eſſential to monarchy, diſtributing fiefs to the principal warriors, and aſſigning certain privileges proper to the ſeveral orders of the ſtate.

Such for a long time was the conſtitution of all the governments which theſe people founded in Italy, in Spain, in Gaul, in Britain at that memorable æra, which changed the fate and place of abode of ſo many nations: An æra for ever memorable, ſince here we trace the firſt link (as it were) of a new chain of events; and hence we ſee ſpring forth the laws, the manners and principles which have ever ſince governed ſo many celebrated nations, whoſe ſuperiority of genius ſeems to have called them forth to determine one day the fate of almoſt all the reſt of the world.

One cannot without difficulty quit an object ſo pleaſing. It is time however to confine myſelf to what more particularly relates to my ſubject. All that we

we learn from the hiſtorical monuments of the North perfectly confirms the teſtimony of Tacitus, and either gives or receives new light from the annals of the other Teutonic nations. This remarkable agreement made M. de Monteſquieu ſay that " in reading Tacitus, we every where " ſee the codes of the barbarous nations: " And in reading the codes of the barba- " rous nations, we are continually reminded " of Tacitus." Notwithſtanding this, we muſt not flatter ourſelves that we can diſcover exactly the extent of power, which the ancient kings of Scandinavia enjoyed, nor the particular rights and privileges of each order of the ſtate. If theſe were never very preciſely determined among a rude people, who had no other laws but cuſtom, how can we diſtinguiſh them exactly at the preſent great diſtance of time? All that we can obſcurely diſcover, is, that the Danes, who before the arrival of Odin, were divided into many nations, and lived in great independence, were by force of arms ſubjected to kings more abſolute, whom this conqueror placed over them. It is ſtill more probable, that the ſame thing happened to the Swedes, who, according to Tacitus, were in his time under the government of a ſingle perſon. If this hiſtorian is well informed, the point of time in

which he has deſcribed the Swedes, muſt have been that immediately after their conqueſt. This event alone will account for that ſtate of deſpotiſm in which he ſuppoſes them to be ſunk. " The Swedes*," he tells us, " honour riches as well as the Romans. " And for this reaſon they have fallen un- " der the dominion of a ſingle perſon. " Their monarchy is no longer moderated " and limited by any reſtrictions ; but is " entirely deſpotic. The arms are not " there as among the other Germanic " people, promiſcuouſly found in every " one's hand, but they are kept ſhut up " under a cloſe guard ; and are even under " the cuſtody of a ſlave." This government ſo " entirely deſpotic " was doubtleſs owing to ſome accident : accordingly it could not be of long duration. An arbitrary government hath ſince been reeſtabliſhed in Sweden upon ſeveral occaſions, but never for any long continuance. This climate, made for liberty, always triumphs in the end over deſpotic ſway, which in other countries hath always triumphed over liberty.

The Danes were not long before they recovered their right of electing their kings, and conſequently all the other rights

* Lat. *Suiones*. Tacit. Germ. c. 44.

leſs

leſs eſſential to liberty. It is true, the people ſeem always to have made it a law to chuſe the neareſt relation of the deceaſed king, or at leaſt ſome one of the royal family, which they reſpected as iſſued from the gods. They ſtill ſhew the places where theſe elections were made: And as Denmark was for a long time divided into three kingdoms, we find accordingly three principal monuments of this cuſtom; the one near Lunden in Scania, the other at Leyra or Lethra in Zealand, and the third near Viburg in Jutland. Theſe monuments, whoſe rude bulk has preſerved them from the ravages of time, are only vaſt unhewn ſtones, commonly twelve in number, ſet upright and placed in form of a circle. In the middle is erected a ſtone much larger than the reſt, on which they made a ſeat for their king *. The other ſtones ſerved as a barrier to keep off the populace, and marked the place of thoſe whom the people had appointed to make the election. They treated alſo in the ſame place of the moſt important affairs. But if the king chanced to die in war or at a diſtance from home, they formed upon the ſpot a place after the ſame model by bringing together the largeſt ſtones they could find. The prin-

* Worm. Monum. Danic.

cipal chiefs got upon theſe ſtones, and with a loud voice delivered their opinions; then the ſoldiers who ſtood in crowds about them ſignified their approbation or aſſent by claſhing their ſhields together in a kind of cadence, or by raiſing certain ſhouts. We know that this cuſtom of electing their kings in the open field prevailed among all the northern nations, and was for a long time neceſſary, becauſe they had no cities. The emperors of Germany were for many ages elected after the ſame manner; and the Poles, more attached to their ancient cuſtoms than other nations, have not to this day, forſaken it.

In Sweden, they joined to the other ceremonies which I have been deſcribing, an oath, reciprocally taken between the king and his ſubjects *. One of the ſenators, or judges of the provinces, convoked an aſſembly to make a new election immediately after the death of the king, and demanded with a loud voice of the people, if they would accept for king the perſon he named, who was always one of the royal family. When they had all given their conſent, the new king was lifted up on the ſhoulders of the ſenators †, in order that all

* Dalin. Suea Rikes. Hiſt. tom. 1. chap. 7.

† We preſerve in England to this day a relique of

all the people might ſee and know him. Then he took Odin to witneſs, that he would obſerve the laws, defend his country, extend its boundaries, revenge whatever injuries his predeceſſors had received from their enemies, and would ſtrike ſome ſignal ſtroke which ſhould render him and his people famous. This oath he renewed at the funeral of his predeceſſor, which was uſually celebrated with great pomp: And alſo on occaſion of the progreſs which he was obliged to make through the chief provinces of the kingdom, in order to receive the homage of his ſubjects. I relate here all the particulars of this ceremony, becauſe the exact conformity which we find between the manners of the Danes and Swedes during the ages of paganiſm, will not ſuffer us to doubt but that the kings of Denmark were elected after the ſame manner. This ſuppoſition is confirmed by what we can diſcover of the ancient conſtitution of the kingdom of Norway. But it is ſufficient juſt to mention here this identity of government in the three principal kingdoms of the North. To deſcribe

of this cuſtom, by carrying our members of parliament, as ſoon as they are elected, in chairs upon the ſhoulders of the burgeſſes, and ſo expoſing them to general view. T.

it minutely in them all would occaſion tireſome repetitions. We have a remarkable fact, relative to this matter, which it will be of much greater conſequence to know, as well on account of the great light which it throws on this ſubject, as on account of its own ſtriking ſingularity.

A colony of Norwegians driven from their own country by the tyranny of one of their kings, eſtabliſhed itſelf in Iceland towards the end of the ninth century *. Hiſtory informs us that immediately, without loſing time, they proceeded to elect magiſtrates, to enact laws, and, in a word, to give their government ſuch a regular form, as might at once inſure their tranquillity and independence. The ſituation in which theſe Icelanders found themſelves is remarkable on many accounts. The genius of this people, their natural good ſenſe, and their love of liberty appeared upon this occaſion in all their vigour. Uninterrupted and unreſtrained by any outward force, we have here a nation delivered up to its own direction, and eſtabliſhing itſelf in a country ſeparated by vaſt ſeas from all the reſt of the world: We ſee therefore in all their inſtitutions nothing

* See a more particular relation of this below, in Chap. XI.

but

but the pure dictates of their own inclinations and ſentiments, and theſe were ſo natural and ſo ſuited to their ſituation and character, that we do not find any general deliberation, any irreſolution, any trial of different modes of government ever preceded that form of civil polity which they at firſt adopted, and under which they lived afterwards ſo many ages. The whole ſettled into form as it were of itſelf, and fell into order without any effort. In like manner as bees form their hives, the new Icelanders, guided by a happy inſtinct, immediately on their landing in a deſert iſland, eſtabliſhed that fine conſtitution wherein liberty is fixed on its proper baſis, viz. a wiſe diſtribution of the different powers of government. An admirable diſcovery, which at firſt ſight, one would think muſt have been the maſter-piece of ſome conſummate politician; and which, nevertheleſs, according to the remark of a great genius of this age *, was compleated

* M. de MONTESQUIEU.——The following account is built on the teſtimony of many ancient annals, both printed and manuſcript, of the Icelanders themſelves; Of which we find various notices and extracts in a multitude of books, particularly in that of Torfæus cited above, and in Arngrim's work intitled Crymogæa.

here, as in other countries, by ſavages in the midſt of foreſts.

Nature having of itſelf divided the iſland into four provinces, the Icelanders followed this diviſion, and eſtabliſhed in each of them a magiſtrate who might be called the Provincial Judge. Each province was ſubdivided into three Prefectures *, which had their reſpective Judges or Prefects. And laſtly, each Prefecture contained a certain number of Bailywicks; in each of which were commonly five inferior magiſtrates, whoſe buſineſs it was to diſtribute juſtice in the firſt inſtance through their own diſtrict; to ſee that good order was preſerved in it †; and to convoke the aſſemblies of the Bailywick, as well ordinary as extraordinary, of which all free men, who poſſeſſed lands of a certain value, were members. In theſe

* Only the northern province or quarter, being larger than the reſt, contained four of theſe Prefectures.

† It was the buſineſs of theſe magiſtrates to puniſh the diſſolute, particularly ſuch as were poor through their own fault. We find in the Icelandic code this remarkable law, which Arngrim thus renders into Latin. *Ejuſmodi medici impune* CASTRANDI *etiamſi cum eorundem nece conjunctum foret.* Tit. de Pupil. c. 33. There is in the ſame code another Law which forbids the giving ſuſtenance or relief of any kind to common beggars. Tit. de Mendic. c. 39 & 36.

aſſemblies they elected the five Judges or Bailifs, who were to be perſons diſtinguiſhed for their wiſdom; and were required to enjoy a certain income in lands, for fear their poverty ſhould expoſe them to contempt or corruption. When the cauſes were of any importance, the whole aſſembly gave their opinion. Without its full conſent a new member could not be received into their community. If any ſuch offered himſelf, he applied to the aſſembly, who examined his motives for making the requeſt, and rejected it, if the petitioner had failed in honour on any occaſion, or was merely too poor: For as the community maintained ſuch of its own members as were by any accident reduced to miſery or want *, it was their common intereſt to exclude ſuch perſons as were indigent: They had for that purpoſe a fund ſupported by contribution, as alſo by what aroſe from the fines, which were the more conſiderable, as they uſed in thoſe times ſcarce any other kind of puniſhment †.

Laſtly,

* Thus the Aſſembly rebuilt (at leaſt in part) any man's houſe that was burnt down, beſtowed a new ſtock of cattle on ſuch as had loſt their own by any contagious diſtemper, &c. In theſe caſes the Bailiffs taxed each citizen according to his ſubſtance. *Firſt Edit.*

† It is a remark of the Author of the SPIRIT OF LAWS, a remark confirmed

Laſtly, this ſame aſſembly of the Baily-wick took care to examine into the conduct of the Bailiffs, received the complaints that were made againſt them, and puniſhed them when convicted of abuſing their authority.

A re-aſſembly of the members, or at leaſt of the deputies of ten ſuch communities, repreſented, what I call a Prefecture. Each quarter or grand province of the iſland contained three of theſe, as we have

firmed by the Hiſtory of all nations, that in proportion as any people love liberty, the milder are their puniſhments. The ancient Germans and Scandinavians, the moſt brave and free race of men that perhaps ever exiſted, knew ſcarcely any other than pecuniary penalties. They carried this ſpirit with them thro' all parts of Europe, as appears from the Codes of the Viſigoths, the Burgundians, &c. But the governments, which they eſtabliſhed in the more ſouthern countries could not ſubſiſt with ſo much lenity.

In Iceland and Norway all crimes were rated at a certain number of Marks. The Mark was divided into eight parts, each of which was equivalent to ſix ells of ſuch ſtuff, as made their ordinary cloaths. Conſequently a Mark was in value equal to 48 ells of this cloth. Now a Mark conſiſted of ſomewhat more than an ounce of fine ſilver. A cow commonly coſt two Marks and a half. Hence we may judge of the quantity of ſilver that was then in thoſe countries. But this remark muſt not be extended to Denmark, which was apparently richer. See Arngrim. Jon. Crymog. lib. 1. p. 86. *Firſt Edit.*

already

already ſeen. The Chief of a Prefecture enjoyed conſiderable dignity. He had a power to aſſemble the ten communities within his diſtrict, and preſided himſelf over all aſſemblies of this ſort, as well ordinary as extraordinary; he was at the ſame time head of the religion within his Prefecture. It was he who appointed the ſacrifices, and other religious ceremonies, which were celebrated in the ſame place where they regulated their political and civil affairs. There lay an appeal to theſe Aſſemblies from the ſentence pronounced by the magiſtrates of the Bailywicks, and here were determined whatever diſputes aroſe between thoſe inferior communities. Here alſo the prefect received the tax, which each citizen was obliged to pay towards the expences of the religious worſhip; and here he judged, in the quality of pontiff, ſuch as were accuſed of profaning temples, of ſpeaking irreverently of the gods, or of any other act of impiety. The penalties inflicted on criminals of this ſort conſiſted for the moſt part of fines, which the aſſemblies empowered the prefect to levy, in order to lay them out in repair of the temples. But when any affair occurred of great importance, or which concerned the whole province, then the members, or perhaps only

the deputies of the three Prefectures met together and compoſed, what they called the States of the Quarter, or Province. Theſe States did not aſſemble regularly like the others, who were required to meet at leaſt once a year; nor do we know exactly what were the objects of their deliberations. All that one can conjecture is, that they had recourſe to it, as to an extraordinary means of terminating ſuch quarrels as aroſe between the communities of the different Prefectures, or to obviate ſome danger which threatened the whole province in general.

Superior to all theſe Aſſemblies of the leſſer Communities and Provinces were the STATES GENERAL of the whole iſland *(Alting)*, which anſwered to the *Als-heriar-ting* of the other Scandinavian nations, to the *Wittena-Gemot* or Parliament of the Anglo-Saxons *, to the *Champs de Mars* or *de May* of the French, and to the *Cortes* of the Spaniards, &c. Theſe aſſembled every year, and each citizen of Iceland thought it his honour and his duty to be preſent at

* *Al-ting* is compounded of *All*, all, and *Ting*, a court of juſtice, aſſize: *Als-heriar-ting* ſignifies, "The Court of all the "Lords:" *Wittena-Gemot*, "The Meeting of "the Wiſe-men." It is evident, that all theſe expreſſions contain at the bottom the ſame idea.

them. The preſident of this great aſſembly was Sovereign Judge of the iſland. He poſſeſſed this office for life, but it was conferred upon him by the States. His principal buſineſs was to convoke the General Aſſembly, and to ſee to the obſervance of the laws; hence the name of *Lagman*, or Man of the Laws, was given to this magiſtrate. He had a power of examining before the General Eſtates, and of reverſing all the ſentences pronounced by inferior judges throughout the iſland, of annulling their ordinances, and even of puniſhing them, if the complaints brought againſt them were well-founded. He could propoſe the enacting of new laws, the repealing or changing of the old ones: and if they paſſed in the General Aſſembly, it was his buſineſs to put them in execution. After this people began to have written laws, and the whole iſland had adopted one common form of juriſprudence, it was the Supreme Judge, who had the keeping of the original authentic copy, to which all the others were to be conformable. To his judgment and that of the aſſembly, lay an appeal from the ſentences given in the inferior courts. The Bailiffs or Prefects, whoſe ſentence he reviſed, were obliged to judge the cauſe over again in his preſence, and he afterwards pronounced ſentence both on the contending

parties, and on the judges. The fear of being condemned and puniſhed before ſo numerous an aſſembly, was (as Arngrim well remarks) a great check upon all theſe ſubaltern judges, and ſerved to keep every magiſtrate within the bounds of his duty. Commonly the Seſſion of theſe General Eſtates laſted ſixteen days, and they ſhow at this time the place of their meeting, which began and ended with ſolemn ſacrifices. It was chiefly during that ſeſſion, that the Sovereign Judge exerciſed his authority. Out of this aſſembly his power ſeems not to have been conſiderable: But he was at all times treated with great honour and reſpect; and was always conſidered as the oracle of the laws and protector of the people. The Icelandic chronicles carefully note the year, wherein each Judge was elected, and the time was computed by the years of his election, as among the Lacedemonians by thoſe of the EPHORI. We ſee by the liſt, which Arngrim has preſerved of them, that there were thirty-eight from the beginning of the commonwealth to its diſſolution: And we find in this number the celebrated hiſtorian Snorro Sturleſon, whom I have already introduced to the reader's knowledge *.

* See above, Pag. 52.

Such

Such was the conſtitution of a republic, which is at preſent quite forgotten in the North, and utterly unknown through the reſt of Europe even to men of much reading, notwithſtanding the great number of poets and hiſtorians, which that republic produced. But fame is not the portion of indigent nations, eſpecially when remote, unconnected with the reſt of mankind, and placed under a rigorous climate. It is eaſy to diſcover here the genius of all the 'Go-'thic*' tribes, and their notions of government. That diſtribution of the people into different communities ſubordinate to one another, that right of being judged every one by the members of his own community, that care of watching over each citizen committed to the community of which he was a member, thoſe general aſſemblies of the whole nation, with whom alone the legiſlative power was depoſited, &c. All theſe inſtitutions exiſted among the Germans already in the time of Tacitus, and without doubt long before. They prevailed in Denmark and Sweden, and we find numerous traces of them at this day. They were carried into Iceland, and there brought to perfection. They followed the Saxons into England; and

* Celtic. *Orig.*

when the times of confuſion had cauſed them to wear out of memory, the great Alfred immortalized his name by reviving them. It would be eaſy to ſhew traces of them in the firſt eſtabliſhments of the Francs in Gaul, of the Goths in Spain, and the ſame in ſeveral countries of Germany: But a diſplay of ſo much erudition would be foreign to my plan. I only point out the way to the reader, and ſhall leave him to perſue at his leiſure a ſubject ſo fruitful and ſo intereſting, whether he is diſpoſed to read what others have written on it, or to follow the train of his own reflections.

With regard to the laws, which prevailed in Scandinavia during the times of paganiſm, all that we can ſay for certain about them may be reduced within very ſmall compaſs. Tradition, cuſtom, maxims learnt by heart, and above all, ſimplicity of manners, ſerved this people in the firſt ages inſtead of laws. They had maxims, which from time immemorial had been in the mouths of their ſages, and which were thought to have been delivered to the firſt men by the gods themſelves. Such were thoſe of which the Icelandic poets have preſerved ſome fragments, under the title of the "Sublime Diſcourſe of Odin," as will be more particularly ſhewn in the

ſequel of this work *. It is doubtful whether the ancient Danes, as well as their neighbours, had written laws, before their converſion to Chriſtianity. It is true, if we will believe Saxo the Grammarian, a king of Denmark named Frotho, who lived many ages before that period, publiſhed laws both civil and military, which were tranſmitted down to the time of that author. But this great antiquity renders the fact too ſuſpicious to be admitted upon the ſingle authority of ſuch an hiſtorian as Saxo. It would be running too great a hazard, to argue on a ſuppoſition, built on ſuch weak foundations; and that regard to truth, which ought to prevail over all other motives, obliges me for once to neglect domeſtic information, and to have recourſe to foreign intelligence.

The ancient inhabitants of Germany and Scandinavia emerged but ſlowly from a ſtate of nature. The ties which linked different families together were for a long time nothing but a confederacy to exerciſe violence or to repel it. They poſſeſſed a great extent of lands, of which they cultivated but little, and reſided on leſs: In ſhort, they lived too ſeparate from each other, to have any great need of civil laws; and their Chiefs

* See Vol. II. towards the end.

had too little authority to make them obſerved, if they had. Hence ſo many little ſocieties and confederacies. Men banded together to revenge an injury: and the ſentiment of honour, as well as intereſt, made them faithful to each other in an aſſociation ſo neceſſary to their welfare. A man's relations and friends who had not revenged his death, would inſtantly have loſt that reputation, which conſtituted their principal ſecurity. The inhabitants of Friezeland lived for a long time in a ſtate of this kind. Moſt of the other German nations had already advanced a ſtep beyond this in the time of Tacitus. Endleſs diſorders, the unavoidable conſequences of the right of ſelf-revenge, had ſuggeſted to the wiſer ſort among them, the neceſſity of magiſtrates, who ſhould interpoſe their authority in private quarrels, and oblige the offended perſon or his relations to receive a preſent from the aggreſſor; that ſo a compenſation being made for an injury, might prevent the conſequences of an eternal reſentment, which from private perſons might extend to the public. And for fear that this manner of terminating differences ſhould become a new ſource of them, the compenſation was determined by an invariable rule, and commonly limited to a certain value in cattle, the only money

money known in thoſe rude ages. A mark of ſubmiſſion of this ſort ſatisfied mens pride as to the point of honour, gratified their avarice, and ſufficiently ſecured them from a repetition of the offence. The Danes, in this reſpect, followed the ſteps of the neighbouring nations. Mere parity of reaſon might give one a right to ſuppoſe this, even if we had not more poſitive proofs; but without accumulating theſe unneceſſarily, we need only caſt our eyes on the ancient laws of the conquerors of Great Britain. It is well known that the Angles and Jutes, who ſhared with the Saxons in the honour of that conqueſt, were Daniſh nations, who came from Jutland and Sleſwick. Now moſt of the laws of that people are ſtill extant, and whoever will run over the collections, publiſhed by Lambard, Wilkins, and Leibnitz, will not doubt but they were all dictated by the ſame ſpirit, and were really the ſame at the bottom. It will be ſufficient to quote a few particulars, to enable us to judge of their general ſpirit; for this is all I undertake to ſhew of them. As to their more particular minute circumſtances they have doubtleſs varied a thouſand times, in different ages, and countries: But theſe we ſhall not deſcend to at preſent.

The laws of the Saxons, as regulated by Charlemagne, and publiſhed by Leibnitz *, eſtabliſhed a compoſition in money for moſt ſorts of crimes; and for want of money this was to be paid in the fleſh of cattle, every limb and joint of which had its known value regulated by law. They carefully diſtinguiſhed the different degrees of offence, as well as thoſe of the rank, which the offended perſon bore in the ſtate. Accordingly for the murder of a grandee or a prince the compoſition was 1440 *ſous* †, and the ſame for every wound that deprived him of his hearing, ſight, or uſe of his limbs. But if this injury was done to a free man, and not to a noble ‡, the compoſition was only 120 *ſous* §; at the ſame time the murder of a ſlave was rated but 30; which was preciſely the price of a ſimple blow, that produced neither ſwelling nor blackneſs, if given to a prince or noble. Much the ſame proportions were obſerved by the law of the Angles. Wounds

* Leibnitz Rer. Brunſwic. tom. 1.

† If the Author computes by modern money: It is 720 pence Engliſh, or about 31. ſterling. T.

‡ The original is *Roda*, whence comes the word *Roturier*, by which the French expreſs at preſent, One who is not a gentleman.

§ 60 pence or 5s. ſterling. T.

given

given to a maiden were eſtimated at double the rate they would have been, if given to a man of the ſame rank of life. It was not the ſame with a woman who had borne children. Outrages againſt modeſty were alſo valued with a degree of exactneſs, of which one would not have thought matters of that nature ſuſceptible. "The laws of "theſe people," ſays M. de Monteſquieu, "judged of inſults offered to men by the "ſize of the wounds, nor did they ſhew "more refinement as to the offences com- "mitted againſt women: So that they "ſeem to have meaſured injuries, as one "meaſures figures in geometry."

Theſe laws vary more in what relates to theft. By the law of the Saxons, it was in moſt caſes puniſhed with death. By that of the Angles, which doubtleſs approaches nearer to the laws of the other Daniſh nations, the robber compounded by paying tripple the value of what he had ſtolen. But when government had acquired a little more ſtability, and when the manners were a little more civilized, men were not ſatiſfied with oppoſing to the diſorder a barrier ſo often ineffectual. The magiſtrates appointed to watch over the public peace, pretended that THEY were inſulted as often as that peace was broken, and therefore over and above the compoſition which was

to atone for the offence, they exacted a fine, either as a ſatisfaction due to the public, or as a recompence for the trouble given themſelves in making up the difference and in protecting the offender. Theſe fines were for a long time all, or almoſt all the puniſhment, which could poſſibly prevail among a valiant and free people, who eſteemed their blood too precious to be ſhed any other way than in battle. Their kings had for many ages no other revenue than what aroſe from theſe fines, and from their own private demeſnes: All other kinds of impoſition were not known till long after that period of time, to which we at preſent confine our reſearches.

If this way of puniſhing crimes may juſtly paſs for ſingular, that of eſtabliſhing proofs in the adminiſtration of juſtice may be eſteemed no leſs ſo. Here all the ignorance, all the barbarity of our anceſtors manifeſt themſelves ſo plainly, that it is not in the power of our reflections to add to them. Their embarraſſment was ſo great when they endeavoured to diſtinguiſh truth from falſhood, that they were obliged to have recourſe to the moſt ſtrange expedients and moſt ridiculous practices. Thus they ſometimes obliged the accuſed to produce a certain number of perſons called COMPURGATORS; not that theſe men had,

or

or were ſuppoſed to have any knowledge of the affair in queſtion, but they were ſimply to ſwear they were perſuaded the accuſed ſpoke true. Beſides this, they often appointed what was called the JUDICIARY COMBAT, and how abſurd ſoever this cuſtom was, it was ſo intimately connected with their opinions concerning deſtiny and providence, that it triumphed for a long time over Religion, Popes, and Councils; and though a hundred times proſcribed, as often revived and appeared again under different ſhapes. Laſtly, when the diſcovery of truth appeared to them to exceed all human powers, they had recourſe to ſupernatural means, and what they called DIVINE JUDGMENTS. They had many ways of conſulting that oracle. For as, according to their notions, all the elements were animated by an Intelligence as incorruptible in its juſtice, as the Deity whence it ſprung, they thought they had nothing to do but to unite the accuſed perſon to one of theſe divinities, and ſo oblige it to declare by the manner of its acting upon him, what judgment it entertained of his innocence. Thus ſometimes they caſt him into a deep water, tied about with cords: If he ſunk, that is, if the Genius of the water received him into its boſom, it declared him to be innocent: If it rejected him, if he ſwam

upon the ſurface, he was looked upon as convicted of the crime *. This was called the WATERY-ORDEAL. The proof by fire, or FIERY-ORDEAL ſeems to have been more in uſe afterwards, and founded upon a different train of reaſoning; for in things of this nature, we muſt not expect ſuch rude minds to act very conſiſtently.

* This kind of proof was more dangerous, than it appears to have been at firſt ſight; for though a man thrown into the water commonly ſinks at firſt to the bottom, yet as they tied him about with large cords, 'and withs,' he ſometimes ſwam on the ſurface ſpight of his teeth. This kind of proof indeed, as well as that of Boiling Water was only for perſons of inferior rank. Others handled hot iron, or put their hands into a red-hot gauntlet, or walked blindfold over burning ploughſhares. If at the end of certain days there remained any marks of the fire on the hands or feet, the accuſed were judged guilty; if not, he was acquitted. There is reaſon to think that, notwithſtanding they took all poſſible precaution, they alſo had recourſe to certain preſervatives againſt the effects of fire, and perhaps the ſame that mountebanks in our times make uſe of, as oft as they amuſe the people with ſpectacles of the ſame kind. Beſides this, men who were accuſtomed to hard labour, to the toils of hunting, and conſtant handling of arms, had rendered their ſkins ſo thick and callous, that they could not eaſily be hurt; and as for the Ladies, they were generally allowed Champions to undergo the trial for them.

Firſt Edit.

As

* As for the ceremonies which accompanied theſe kinds of proof, the caſes in which they were appointed, and the other minute circumſtances, they varied in different times and places: And as imitation and habit perpetuate cuſtoms long after the cauſes of them have ceaſed, the ORDEAL was practiſed during many ages by men, who doubtleſs believed nothing about the genii preſiding over the ſeveral elements, or the other doctrines of the ancient religion †. I ſhall not enter on the minute hiſtory of the ORDEAL, &c. which was not peculiar to the ancient Danes, and may be found deſcribed in other books ‡. I thought proper only to mark the connection between them and the doctrines of that Religion, which I deſcribed in the preceding chapters: A connection which has

* From hence to the end of the chap. is omitted in the 2d edit. of the original. T.

† Thus long after Chriſtianity was eſtabliſhed among the Anglo-Saxons, king Edward the Confeſſor (a reputed ſaint) is ſaid to have put his mother to the proof of the Burning Plough-Shares.—And even down to our own times, the WATERY ORDEAL, or Proof by Swimming, has been employed by the vulgar for the trial of Witchcraft, whenever they could find means to put it in practice. T.

‡ Vid. Wormius in Monum. Danic. lib. i. c. 11. and Steph. Stephanius in his Notes on Saxo Grammaticus.

been ſeldom attended to, and which ſhews that it is only for want of ſtudying mankind, that they appear to act wholly without motives or principles of conduct. It was king Valdemar the ſecond * to whom the glory belongs of having aboliſhed this abſurd and inhuman practice in Denmark †.

* He reigned from the year 1202, to 1241. T.

† I cannot conclude this ſubject without obſerving that we find ſome traces of the ORDEAL among the ancient Greeks and Romans. Thus in the ANTIGONE of Sophocles, (Act. II. Sc. II.) we have the following remarkable paſſage, which ſhows it was not unknown in Greece,

"The guards accus'd each other; nought was prov'd,
"But each ſuſpected each, and all deny'd,
"Offering in proof of innocence to GRASP
"The BURNING STEEL, to WALK THRO' FIRE, and take
"Their ſolemn oath they knew not of the deed."

See Franklin's Sophocles and note on the above paſſage.—See alſo Stiernhök de Jur. Vet. Suec. lib. i. c. 8. apud Dalin. Sue. Rik. Hiſt. tom. i. ch. 7.

Pliny ſpeaking of a feaſt, which the ancient Romans celebrated every year in honour of the ſun, obſerves that the prieſts, who were to be of the family of the Hirpians, danced on this occaſion bare-foot on burning coals without burning themſelves: This was apparently a relique of the Fiery Ordeal. Plin. Hiſt. Nat. lib. vii. 2.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IX.

The paſſion of the ancient Scandinavians for arms: their valour: the manner in which they made war. A digreſſion concerning the ſtate of population among them.

" ROME had reckoned from its " foundation ſix hundred and forty " years, when the arms of the Cimbri " were firſt heard of among us. From " that time to the preſent have elapſed two " hundred and ſix years more. So long " have we been in conquering Germany. " And in the courſe of ſo tedious a war, " what various loſſes have been ſuſtained " by each party? No nation hath given " us more frequent alarms; neither the " Samnites, the Carthaginians, the Spa- " niards, the Gauls, nor even the Par- " thians: ſo much leſs vigour hath the " deſpotic power of Arſaces had, than the " liberty of the Germans. For, except

" the defeat of Craſſus, what hath the
" conquered and proſtrate Eaſt to object
" to the current of our ſucceſs? Whereas
" the Germans have taken or defeated five
" generals of the Republic, who com-
" manded ſo many conſular armies. They
" cut off Varus and three legions from
" Auguſtus himſelf. Nor was that ad-
" vantage obtained with impunity, which
" Marius gained over them in Italy, the
" divine Julius in Gaul, and Druſus, Ti-
" berius and Germanicus in their own
" country. And even preſently after this,
" the tremendous threats of Caligula became
" the object of their ſport. A reſpite
" followed, till profiting by our diſcord
" and civil wars, they attacked our le-
" gions in their winter quarters, and even
" undertook the conqueſt of Gaul. We
" have ſince driven them back beyond the
" Rhine: but in theſe latter times, our
" victories over them have been leſs real,
" than the pomp of our triumphs. . . . .
" If this people cannot be brought to love
" us, at leaſt may they always hate each
" other! ſince in the preſent declining
" fates of the empire, fortune can grant
" us no greater favour, than the diſſen-
" tions of our enemies *."

* Tacit. Germ. c. 37, et c. 33.

Such

Such was the opinion entertained of the German and northern nations, by the people who conquered the reſt of the world. Such, according to the confeſſion of Tacitus, was that martial courage, that ardour, that conſtancy in defending and avenging their liberty, which ſo early threatened the power of Rome, and in a few ages after overturned it. It is not my preſent buſineſs to write the hiſtory of that great revolution, which changed the face of Europe, but my ſubject leads me to diſcloſe its cauſes, ſince they are contained in the opinions and manners which I am deſcribing. We only want here that penetrating eye, that deep ſenſe and energy of ſtyle, which diſtinguiſhed the author I have been tranſlating. The ſources whence iſſued thoſe torrents of people, which from the North overwhelmed all Europe, the principles which put them in motion, and gave them ſo much activity and force, theſe objects, ſo grand and intereſting, have been but ſlightly and weakly treated of. The more enlightened people, who were the victims of theſe ravages, were too much preſſed with the weight of their calamity, to have leiſure to trace its remote cauſes. Like the thunder which remains unſeen in the clouds till the moment it burſts forth, and whoſe nature we have no

time to ſtudy while it is ſtriking us; theſe unexpected irruptions would hardly become the objects of reſearch, till after their effects were forgotten. Hence the relations that have been given us of them, are ſo unintereſting, confuſed and obſcure: faults to which every hiſtory will be liable which only gives us a heap of facts, without being able to develope their cauſes. The greateſt part then of the hiſtorical phaenomena of the middle ages can only be explained by a deep inſight into the manners of the northern nations. It is only from thence we can ever be able to comprehend what could induce whole nations to tranſport themſelves from one extremity of Europe to the other; could break through the tyes of country, which ſo ſtrongly attach men to the places of their birth; could render them unanimous in ſuch ſtrange projects, and make them thus ſpread themſelves beyond their own boundaries with ſuch exuberance and impetuoſity.

I have already hinted, that the ancient Scandinavians breathed nothing but war, which was at once with them the ſource of honour, riches and ſafety. Their education, laws, prejudices, morality and religion, all concurred to make that their ruling paſſion and only object. From

their

their moſt tender age they applied themſelves to learn the military art; they hardened their bodies, and accuſtomed themſelves to cold, fatigue and hunger. They exerciſed themſelves in running, in the chace, in ſwimming acroſs the greateſt rivers, and in handling their arms. The very ſports of childhood itſelf, and of early youth were directed all towards this end: dangers were always intermingled with their play. For it conſiſted in taking frightful leaps, in climbing up the ſteepeſt rocks, in fighting naked with offenſive weapons, in wreſtling with the utmoſt fury: it was therefore common to ſee them at the age of fifteen years already grown robuſt men, and able to make themſelves feared in combat. It was alſo at this age that their young men became their own maſters, which they did by receiving a ſword, a buckler and a lance. This ceremony was performed in ſome public meeting. One of the principal perſons of the aſſembly armed the youth in public. "This, we are told by Tacitus, was his "*Toga Virilis*, his entrance upon dignities; before this he made only part of a "family, now he became a member of "the ſtate." After this he was obliged to provide for his own ſubſiſtence, and was either now to live by hunting, or by joining

in ſome incurſion againſt an enemy. Particular care was taken to prevent theſe young ſoldiers from enjoying too early an acquaintance with the oppoſite ſex, till their limbs had acquired all the vigour of which they were capable. Indeed they could have no hope to be acceptable to the women, but in proportion to the courage and addreſs they had ſhown in war and in their military exerciſes. Accordingly we ſee in an ancient ſong, preſerved by Bartholin *, a king of Norway extremely ſurprized that, as he could perform eight different exerciſes, his miſtreſs ſhould preſume to reject his ſuit. I ſhall frequently have occaſion to produce new inſtances of this manner of thinking among their women: it is ſufficient at preſent to obſerve, that they were not likely to ſoften their children by too much delicacy or indulgence. Theſe tender creatures were generally born in the midſt of camps and armies. Their eyes, from the moment they were firſt opened, ſaw nothing but military ſpectacles, arms, effuſion of blood, and combats either real or in ſport: thus as they grew up from their infancy, their ſouls were early diſpoſed to imbibe the cruel prejudices of their fathers.

* See a tranſlation of this in the ſecond volume.

Their

Their laws for the moſt part (like thoſe of the ancient Lacedemonians) ſeemed to know no other virtues than thoſe of a military nature, and no other crimes but cowardice. They inflicted the greateſt penalties on ſuch as fled the firſt in battle. The laws of the ancient Danes, according to Saxo, excluded them from ſociety, and declared them infamous. Among the Germans this was ſometimes carried ſo far as to ſuffocate cowards in mud; after which they covered them over with hurdles: to ſhew, ſays Tacitus, that though the puniſhment of crimes ſhould be public, there are certain degrees of cowardice and infamy which ought to be buried in eternal ſilence. The moſt flattering diſtinctions were reſerved for ſuch as had performed ſome ſignal exploit; and the laws themſelves diſtributed men into different ranks according to their different degrees of courage. Frotho, king of Denmark, had ordained, according to Saxo, that whoever ſolicited an eminent poſt in the army, ought upon all occaſions to attack one enemy; to face two; to retire only one ſtep back from three; and not to make an actual retreat till aſſaulted by four. Hence was formed that prejudice ſo deeply rooted among theſe people, that there was no other way to acquire glory, but by the

profeſſion of arms, and a fanatic valour: a prejudice the force of which diſplayed itſelf without obſtruction at a time, when luxury was unknown; when that deſire, ſo natural, and ſo active among men, of drawing upon themſelves the attention of their equals, had but one ſingle object and ſupport; and when their country and their fellow citizens had no other treaſure but the fame of their exploits, and the terrour thereby excited in their neighbours.

The rules of juſtice, far from checking theſe prejudices, had been themſelves warped and adapted to their bias. It is no exaggeration to ſay, that all the 'Gothic and' Celtic nations entertained opinions on this ſubject, quite oppoſite to the theory of our times. They looked upon war as a real act of juſtice, and eſteemed force an inconteſtible title over the weak, a viſible mark that God had intended to ſubject them to the ſtrong. They had no doubt but the intentions of this divinity had been to eſtabliſh the ſame dependance among men which there is among animals, and ſetting out from the principle of the inequality of men, as our modern civilians do from that of their equality, they inferred thence that the weak had no right to what they could not defend. This maxim, which formed the baſis of the law of nations among

among the ancient inhabitants of Europe, being dictated by their moſt darling paſſion, we cannot wonder that they ſhould ſo ſteadily act up to it in practice. And which, after all, is worſt; to act and think as they did, or like the moderns, with better principles to act as ill? As to the ancient nations, we attribute nothing to them here but what is juſtified by a thouſand facts. They adopted the above maxim in all its rigour, and gave the name of Divine Judgment not only to the JUDICIARY COMBAT, but to conflicts and battles of all ſorts: victory being in their opinion the only certain mark by which Providence enables us to diſtinguiſh thoſe, whom it has appointed to command others. "Valour, ſays a German warrior in Ta-"citus, is the only proper goods of men. "The Gods range themſelves on the ſide "of the ſtrongeſt *."

Laſtly, Religion, by annexing eternal happineſs to the military virtues, had given the laſt degree of activity to the ardour and propenſity theſe people had for war. There were no fatigues, no dangers nor torments capable of damping a paſſion ſo well countenanced, and the deſire of meriting

* Tacit. hiſt. lib. IV. c. 17. Pelloutier hiſt. des Celtes, tom. I. p. 415.

ſo great a reward. We have ſeen what motives this religion offered to its votaries; and we cannot fail to recall them in reading ſome inſtances of that courage which diſtinguiſhed the ancient Scandinavians, and of their contempt of death itſelf, which I ſhall produce from the moſt authentic chronicles of Iceland.

Hiſtory informs us, that HAROLD ſurnamed BLAATAND or BLUE TOOTH (a king of Denmark, who reigned in the middle of the tenth century) had founded on the coaſts of Pomerania, which he had ſubdued, a city named Julin or Jomſburg; where he ſent a colony of young Danes, and beſtowed the government on a celebrated warrior named Palnatoko. This new Lycurgus had made of that city a ſecond Sparta, and every thing was directed to this ſingle end, to form complete ſoldiers. The author who has left us the hiſtory of this colony aſſures us, that "it "was forbidden there ſo much as to men-"tion the name of Fear, even in the moſt "imminent dangers *." No citizen of Jomſburg was to yield to any number however great, but to fight intrepidly without flying, even from a very ſuperior force.

* See Jomſwikinga Saga, in Bartholin. de cauſ. contempt. mort. lib. i. c. 5.

The

The ſight of preſent and inevitable death would have been no excuſe with them for making any the leaſt complaint, or for ſhewing the ſlighteſt apprehenſion. And this legiſlator really appears to have eradicated from the minds of moſt of the youths bred up under him, all traces of that ſentiment ſo natural and ſo univerſal, which makes men think on their deſtruction with horror. Nothing can ſhew this better than a ſingle fact in their hiſtory, which deſerves to have place here for its ſingularity. Some of them having made an irruption into the territories of a powerful Norwegian lord, named Haquin, were overcome ſpite of the obſtinacy of their reſiſtance; and the moſt diſtinguiſhed among them being made priſoners, were, according to the cuſtom of thoſe times, condemned to death. The news of this, far from afflicting them, was, on the contrary, received with joy. The firſt who was led to puniſhment was content to ſay, without changing countenance, and without expreſſing the leaſt ſign of fear, " Why " ſhould not the ſame happen to me, as " did to my father? He died, and ſo " muſt I." A warrior, named Thorchill, who was to cut off the head of the ſecond, having aſked him what he felt at the ſight of death, he anſwered, that " he remem-

" bered too well the laws of Jomſburg to " utter any words that denoted fear." The third, in reply to the ſame queſtion, ſaid, " he rejoyced to dye with glory, and that " he preferred ſuch a death to an infamous " life like that of Thorchill's." The fourth made an anſwer much longer and more extraordinary. " I ſuffer with a " good heart; and the preſent hour is to " me very agreeable. I only beg of you," added he, addreſſing himſelf to Thorchill, " to be very quick in cutting off my head; " for it is a queſtion often debated by us " at Jomſburg, whether one retains any " ſenſe after being beheaded. I will there- " fore graſp this knife in my hand; if after " my head is cut off I ſtrike it towards " you, it will ſhew I have not loſt all ſenſe: " if I let it drop, it will be a proof of the " contrary. Make haſte therefore, and " decide the diſpute." ' Thorchill,' adds the hiſtorian, ' cut off his head in moſt ' expeditious manner, but the knife, as ' might be expected, dropt from his hand.' The fifth ſhewed the ſame tranquillity, and died rallying and jeering his enemies. The ſixth begged of Thorchill, that he might not be led to puniſhment like a ſheep *; " ſtrike the blow in my face," ſaid he,

* Barthol. lib. i. c. 5. p. 51.

" I

" I will ſit ſtill without ſhrinking; and " take notice whether I once wink my " eyes, or betray one ſign of fear in my " countenance. For we inhabitants of " Jomſburg are uſed to exerciſe ourſelves " in trials of this ſort, ſo as to meet the " ſtroke of death, without once moving." He kept his promiſe before all the ſpectators, and received the blow without betraying the leaſt ſign of fear, or ſo much as winking his eyes *. The ſeventh, ſays the hiſtorian, " was a very beautiful " young man, in the flower of his age. " His long fair hair, as fine as ſilk, floated " in curls and ringlets on his ſhoulders. " Thorchill aſked him what he thought of " death? I receive it willingly, ſaid he, " ſince I have fulfilled the greateſt duty of " life, and have ſeen all thoſe put to death " whom I would not ſurvive. I only beg " of you one favour, not to let my hair be " touched by a ſlave, or ſtained with my " blood †."

* Barthol. ibid.

† In Bartholin it is, *Id unicum a te peto, ne mancipia me ad mortem ducant, neu quis te inferior capillum meum teneat*, &c. M. Mallet has omitted the circumſtance of the hair in his 2d. edit.

Bartholin gives the ſpeech of the EIGHTH perſon, which, though ſpirited, being not ſo ſtriking as the former, our author has omitted. T.

This conſtancy in the laſt moments was not, however, the peculiar effect of the laws and education of the Jomſburgians. The other Danes have often given the ſame proofs of intrepidity; or rather this was the general character of all the inhabitants of Scandinavia. It was with them an inſtance of ſhameful puſillanimity to utter upon ſuch occaſions the leaſt groan, or to change countenance, but eſpecially to ſhed tears. The Danes, ſays Adam of Bremen *, "are remarkable for this, that if "they have committed any crime, they "had rather ſuffer death, than blows. "There is no other puniſhment for them "but either the ax, or ſervitude. As for "groans, complaints and other bemoan-"ings of that kind, in which We find "relief, they are ſo detefted by the Danes, "that they think it mean to weep for "their ſins, or for the death of their deareſt relations." But if a private ſoldier looked upon tears as peculiar to weakneſs or ſlavery, their great warriours, the chiefs, all who aſpired to fame and glory, carried the contempt of death much further. King Regner, who, as I have once before obſerved, dyed ſinging the pleaſure of receiving death in the field of battle, cries

* Adam Bremen. de ſitu Daniæ, c. 213.

out

out at the end of a ſtanza, " the hours of " my life are paſſed away, I ſhall die " laughing * :" And many paſſages in ancient hiſtory plainly ſhow that this was not a poetical hyperbole. Saxo, ſpeaking of a ſingle combat, ſays, that one of the champions FELL, LAUGHED, AND DYED, an epitaph as ſhort as energetic †. An officer belonging to a king of Norway, celebrating in verſe the death of his maſter, concludes his elogium with theſe words, " It ſhall " hereafter be recorded in hiſtories, that " king Halfer died laughing ‖." A warrior having been thrown upon his back, in wreſtling with his enemy, and the latter finding himſelf without his arms, the vanquiſhed perſon promiſed to wait without changing his poſture while he fetched a ſword to kill him; and he faithfully kept his word. To die with his arms in his hand was the vow of every free man; and the pleaſing idea they had of this kind of death, would naturally lead them to dread ſuch as proceeded from diſeaſe and old age. In the joy therefore which they teſtified at the approach of a violent death, they might frequently ex-

* Barthol. p. 4.
† Saxo Gram. lib. ii. et vide Bodvar's Biarka Saga apud Barthol. lib. i. c. 1. p. 5.
‖ Barthol. p. 6.

preſs no more than their real ſentiments, though doubtleſs it was ſometimes intermixt with oſtentation. The general tenor of their conduct proves that they were moſt commonly ſincere in this; and ſuch as know the power which education, example and prejudice have over men, will find no difficulty in receiving the multitude of teſtimonies, which antiquity hath left us of their extraordinary valour. "The philo-"ſophy of the Cimbri," ſays Valerius Maximus, "is gay and couragious: they "leap for joy in a battle, that they are "going to quit life in ſo glorious a man-"ner: in ſickneſs they lament for fear of "a ſhameful and miſerable end *." Cicero remarks, that in proportion as men are intrepid in war, they are weak and impatient under bodily pains. "Happy in "their miſtake," ſays Lucan, "are the "people who live beneath the Pole! per-"ſuaded that death is only a paſſage to a "long life, they are undiſturbed by the "moſt grievous of all fears, that of dy-"ing. Hence they eagerly run to arms, "and their minds are capable of meet-"ing death: hence they eſteem it cow-"ardice to ſpare a life which they ſhall

* Val. Max. lib. ii. cap. 6. p. 11. Cicero Tuſc. Quæſt. lib. ii. cap. ult.

"ſo

" ſo ſoon recover *." The hiſtory of ancient Scandinavia is full of paſſages expreſſive of this manner of thinking. The illuſtrious warriors, who found themſelves waſting by ſome lingering illneſs, were not always content barely to accuſe their fate. They often availed themſelves of the few moments that were yet remaining, to ſhake off life by a way more glorious. Some of them would be carried into a field of battle, that they might die in the engagement: others ſlew themſelves: many procured this melancholy ſervice to be performed them by their friends, who conſidered this as a moſt ſacred duty. " There " is on a mountain in Iceland," ſays the author of an old Icelandic romance †, " a " rock

* As only a looſe paraphraſe of Lucan's words is given in the text, the Reader will be glad to ſee the original here.

Orbe alio longæ, canitis ſi cognita, vitæ
Mors media eſt. Certe populi quos deſpicit Arctos
Felices errore ſuo! quos ille timorum
Maximus haud urget lethi metus; inde ruendi
In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces
Mortis: et ignavum redituræ parcere vitæ.

Lib. i.

† The old SAGA, or hiſtory here quoted, contains a mixture of truth and fiction, but ſhews us plainly what opinion was held of SUICIDE, and how

" rock ſo high that no animal can fall " from the top and live. Here men be- " take themſelves when they are afflicted " and unhappy. From this place all our " anceſtors, even without waiting for ſick- " neſs, have departed unto Odin. It is uſe- " leſs therefore to give ourſelves up to groans " and complaints, or to put our relations " to needleſs expences, ſince we can eaſily " follow the example of our fathers who " have all gone by the way of this rock." There was ſuch another in Sweden, appropriated to the ſame uſe, which was figuratively called the HALL OF ODIN, becauſe it was a kind of veſtibule or entry to

how commonly it was practiſed heretofore in the North.

Procopius attributes the ſame thing to the Heruli, a Gothic people. *Apud Herulos*, ſays he, *nec ſenibus, nec ægrotis fas erat vitam producere: et ſi quem ſenium occupaſſet, aut morbus, rogare is cogebatur propinquos, ut quamprimum hominum numero eum tollerent.* Procop. Goth. lib. ii. c. 14.

Silius ſays of the ancient inhabitants of Spain,

Prodiga gens animæ, & properare facillima mortem;
Namque ubi tranſcendit florentes viribus annos,
Impatiens ævi ſpernit noviſſe ſenectam
Et fati modus in dextra eſt.

All

to the palace of that God ‡. Laſtly, if none

All theſe authorities, which it would be eaſy to multiply, prove that I attribute nothing to the northern nations, which is not poſitively confirmed by hiſtorians, as well ſtrangers as their own countrymen; and that one cannot reproach the ancient Scandinavians with theſe barbarous prejudices, without condemning at the ſame time the anceſtors of half the nations of Europe. Vid. Pelloutier, tom. ii. lib. 3. ch. 18. *Firſt Edit.*

‡ We have a particular deſcription of this place by Sir William Temple; which it will be worth while to produce at large.

"I will not," he ſays, "trouble myſelf with "more paſſages out of "the Runic poems con-"cerning this ſuperſti-"tious principle [of pre-"ferring a violent death, "&c.] but will add a teſti-"mony of it, which was "given me at Nimeguen, "by count Oxenſtern, "the firſt of the Swediſh "embaſſadors in that aſ-"ſembly. In diſcourſe "upon this ſubject, and "in confirmation of this "opinion having been "general among the "Goths of thoſe coun-"tries; he told me there "was ſtill in Sweden a "place which was a me-"morial of it, and was "called ODIN'S-HALL. "That it was a great bay "in the ſea, encompaſſed "on three ſides with "ſteep and ragged rocks; "and that in the time of "the Gothic paganiſm, "men that were either "ſick of diſeaſes they "eſteemed mortal or in-"curable, or elſe grown "invalid with age, and "thereby paſt all military "action, and fearing to "die meanly and baſely "(as they eſteemed it) "in their beds, they "uſually cauſed them-"ſelves to be brought to "the neareſt part of theſe "rocks, and from thence "threw themſelves down

none of theſe reliefs were afforded, and eſpecially when Chriſtianity had baniſhed theſe cruel practices, the heroes conſoled themſelves at leaſt by putting on complete armour as ſoon as they found their end approaching; thus making (as it were) a ſolemn proteſt againſt the kind of death to which they were forced involuntarily to ſubmit. After this it will not be thought wonderful that the clients of a great lord, and all thoſe who inliſted under a chief for ſome expedition, ſhould make a vow not to ſurvive their commander; or that this vow ſhould always be performed in all its rigour *. Neither will it be ſurprizing that private ſoldiers ſhould ſometimes form among themſelves a kind of ſociety or confraternity, in which the ſeveral members engaged, at the expence of their own lives, to avenge the death of their aſſociates, provided it were honourable and violent. All theſe dangers were, in their opinion, ſo many favourable and precious occaſions of

" into the ſea, hoping by " the boldneſs of ſuch a " violent death, to renew " the pretence of admiſ- " ſion into the Hall of " Odin, which they had " loſt, by failing to die " in combat and with " their arms." Miſcellanea, Part II. Eſſay 3. part 4. T.

* The ſame thing prevailed among diverſe Celtic nations: they called thoſe who thus engaged themſelves to their chiefs, *ſoldurii*. *Firſt Edit.*

meriting

meriting glory and eternal happineſs. Accordingly, we never find any among theſe people guilty of cowardice, and the bare ſuſpicion of that vice was always attended with univerſal contempt. A man who had loſt his buckler, or who had received a wound behind, durſt never more appear in public. In the hiſtory of England *, we ſee a famous Daniſh captain named Siward, who had ſent his ſon to attack a province in Scotland, aſk with great coolneſs thoſe who brought the news of his death, whether he had received his wounds behind or before? The meſſengers telling him he was wounded before, the father cries out, " then I have only cauſe " to rejoice: for any other death would " have been unworthy of me and my ſon." A conqueror could not exerciſe a more terrible vengeance upon his captives, than to condemn them to ſlavery. " There is," ſays Saxo, " in the heart of the Danes, an " inſurmountable averſion to ſervitude, " which makes them eſteem it the moſt " dreadful of all conditions †." The ſame hiſtorian deſcribes to us a king of Denmark, named Frotho, taken in battle by a king his enemy, and obſtinately refuſing all offers of

* Brompton. Ubb. Jom. Chronic, p. 946.
† Saxo Gramm. lib. xii.

life which that prince could make him. "To "what end," ſays he, "ſhould I reſerve "myſelf for ſo great a diſgrace? What "good can the remainder of my life af-"ford me, that can counter-ballance the "remembrance of my misfortunes, and "the regret which my miſery would cauſe "me? And even if you ſhould reſtore me "my kingdom, if you ſhould bring me "back my ſiſter, if you ſhould repair all "the loſs of my treaſure, would all this "recover my honour? All theſe benefits "would never replace me in my former "ſtate, but future ages would always ſay, "FROTHO HATH BEEN TAKEN BY HIS "ENEMY." In all combats, and the number of them is prodigious in the ancient hiſtories of the North, we always find both parties continually repeating the words glory, honour, and contempt of death, and by this means raiſing one another to that pitch of enthuſiaſm, which produces extraordinary actions. A general never forgot to remind his troops of theſe motives when he was going to give battle; and not infrequently they prevented him, and flew to the engagement of themſelves, chanting ſongs of war, marching in cadence, and raiſing ſhouts of joy.

Laſtly, like the heroes of Homer, thoſe of ancient Scandinavia, in the exceſs of

their

their over-boiling courage, dared to defy the Gods themſelves. "Though they "ſhould be ſtronger than the Gods," ſays a boaſtful warrior ſpeaking of his enemies, "I would abſolutely fight them *." And in Saxo Grammaticus we hear another wiſhing ardently that he could but meet with Odin, that he might attack him: expreſſing his mind by verſes to this effect. "Where at preſent is he, whom they call "ODIN, that warrior ſo completely armed, "who hath but one eye to guide him? "Ah, if I could but ſee him, this re- "doubted ſpouſe of Frigga; in vain ſhould "he be covered with his ſnow-white "buckler, in vain mounted upon his lofty "ſteed, he ſhould not leave his abode of "Lethra without a wound. It is lawful "to encounter a warrior god †."

A

* Bartholin. lib. i. c. 6.

† SAXO GRAM. lib. ii. apud Barthol. lib. i. c. 8.—The ſame author relates that a Daniſh prince, named Hother, reſiſted the united forces of Odin, Thor, and the ſquadrons of the gods. "And the victory," he adds, "would have re- "mained with the gods, "if Hother, breaking "through their thickeſt "ranks, and aſſailing "them with ſuch fury as "a mortal can ſuperior "beings, had not ren- "dered the club of the "god Thor uſeleſs, by "cutting it off at the "handle. Weakened by "this ſudden and unex- "pected ſtroke, the gods "were forced to betake "themſelves to flight."

A paſſion ſo ſtrong, ſo general and ſo blind could not but give a tincture of its character to whatever it could poſſibly extend to; and therefore we muſt not be ſurprized that they ſhould take it into their heads to deify the inſtruments of war, without which that paſſion could not have been gratified. From the earlieſt antiquity they paid divine honours to their ſwords, their battle-axes and their pikes. The Scythians commonly ſubſtituted a ſword as the moſt proper ſymbol to repreſent the ſupreme god. It was by planting a ſpear in the middle of a field, that they uſually marked out the place ſet apart for

[Saxo. lib. iii. Barthol. lib. i. c. 6.] It was a received opinion among them, that a man might attack and fight the gods; and it is needleſs to remark with Saxo, that theſe were only imaginary deities. No one is tempted to take ſuch relations literally, and they only deſerve to be mentioned becauſe they ſhew us what manner of thinking prevailed among the people who invented ſtories of this ſort. From them we may at leaſt infer that the confidence with which their bodily ſtrength and courage inſpired theſe ancient Danes muſt have been exceſſive to make them brave and defy whatever was moſt formidable in their ſyſtem of religion. But Diomedes's wounding Venus concealed in a cloud, his defying Jupiter, as well as the other combats of men with the gods deſcribed in the Iliad, have already ſhown us, to what a degree of intoxication and madneſs men may arrive, who think themſelves above all fear. *Firſt Edit.*

prayers

prayers and ſacrifices: and when they had relaxed from their primitive ſtrictneſs, ſo far as to build temples and ſet up idols in them, they yet preſerved ſome traces of the ancient cuſtom, by putting a ſword in the hands of ODIN's ſtatues. The reſpect they had for their arms made them alſo ſwear by inſtruments ſo valuable and ſo uſeful, as being the moſt ſacred things they knew. Accordingly, in an ancient Icelandic poem, a Scandinavian, to aſſure himſelf of a perſon's good faith, requires him to ſwear "by the ſhoulder of a horſe, and "the edge of a SWORD *." This oath was uſual more eſpecially on the eve of ſome great engagement: the ſoldiers engaged

* The paſſage at large, as tranſlated by Bartholin, [lib. i. cap. 6.] is

Juramenta mihi prius omnia dabis
Ad latus navis, et ad ſcuti extremitatem,
Ad equi armum, et ad GLADII ACIEM, *&c.*

It is therefore with peculiar propriety and decorum (as is well obſerved by his commentators) that our Shakeſpear makes his PRINCE OF DENMARK call upon his companions to SWEAR UPON HIS SWORD.

—— —— Come hither gentlemen,
And lay your hands againe upon my ſword,
Never to ſpeake of this that you have heard
Sweare by my SWORD. —— ——
HAMLET. A. I. ſc. ult. T.

themſelves by an oath of this kind, not to flee though their enemies ſhould be never ſo ſuperior in number.

From the ſame ſource proceeded that propenſity to duels and ſingle combats, ſo remarkable among all the 'Gothic *' nations, and which of all their barbarous cuſtoms has been moſt religiouſly kept up by their preſent deſcendants. In Denmark, and through all the North, they provoked a man to fight a duel, by publicly calling him NIDING or "infamous †:" for

* Celtic. Orig.

† In the ſame manner as giving the LYE is the higheſt provocation in modern times, becauſe it implies a charge of meanneſs, falſhood and cowardice: ſo the word NIDING or NITHING anciently included in it the ideas of extreme wickedneſs, meanneſs and infamy. It ſignified a villainous baſe wretch, a daſtardly coward, a ſordid ſtingy worthleſs creature: (*Homo ſceleratus, nequam, apoſtata, fœdifragus, ſumme infamis, ſordide parcus, &c.* being derived by the greateſt etymologiſt of the preſent age from the Icelandic nýd, *rejectanea, contumelia, &c.* Vid. LYE, in Junii etymolog. Anglican.) No wonder that an imputation of this kind ſhould be ſo reproachful among an open and brave people: or that they would rather do any thing than incur it.

We have a remarkable proof in Engliſh hiſtory how much this name was dreaded and abhorred by our anceſtors. King William Rufus having occaſion to draw together a ſudden body of forces, only ſent word to all ſuch as held of him in fee, that thoſe who did not repair

for he who had received ſo deep a ſtain, without endeavouring to waſh it out with the blood of his adverſary, would have loſt much more than the life he was ſo deſirous to ſave. Baniſhed by public indignation from the ſociety of men, degraded from his quality of citizen, and ſcarce regarded as a human creature, he had nothing left for it but a ſhameful and inſecure flight.

repair to his aſſiſtance, ſhould be deemed NITHING; and without further ſummons they all flocked to his ſtandard. *Rex irâ inflammatus*, ſays Matthew Paris, *ſtipendiarios milites ſuos Anglos congregat, et abſque morâ, ut ad obſidionem veniant, jubet, niſi velint ſub nomine* NITHING, *quod Latine* NEQUAM *ſonat, recenſeri. Angli (qui nihil contumelioſius et vilius eſtimant quam hujuſmodi ignominioſo vocabulo notari) catervatim ad regem confluentes, ingentes copias conficiunt.* (M. Par. ſub ann. 1089.) The word NITHING for ſome ages after continued in uſe in this kingdom, but chiefly in the ſenſe of STINGY, NIGGARDLY, &c. The Tranſlator has ſeen an ancient MS. poem, that was written between the reigns of Edward III. and Edw. IV. in which a perſon is thus exhorted,

Looke thou be kind and curteous aye,
Of meate and drinke be never Nithing.

which ſenſe of the word ſtill obtains in Denmark, as we learn from Bartholin. *Denotat* NIDING *modernis Danis virum ſordidè parcum atque tenacem.* Lib. i. c. 7. p. 98. T.

The dreadful conſequences of their ſenſibility with regard to what we falſely call HONOUR, extended often from private perſons to a whole people; and nations, blind to their true welfare, waged long and cruel wars for ſuch chimerical intereſts as really ought not to have armed one ſingle individual againſt another. Under the reign of Harald Blaatand, king of Denmark, the Icelanders provoked by his having detained one of their ſhips laden with merchandiſe, flew for revenge to a ſpecies of arms that were familiar to them, and made verſes upon him ſo very ſatirical, that Harald, ſtung to the quick, ſent out a fleet to ravage the iſland. This obliged the inhabitants to make a law, which is ſtill extant in their ancient code, forbidding any perſon, under capital puniſhment, to compoſe ſatirical verſes upon the kings of Denmark, Sweden, or Norway.

After ſo many efforts to acquire glory, it was very natural to think how to perpetuate it. To this end the ancient Scandinavians employed various means ſuitable to the groſſneſs and rudeneſs of the times; which if they have deceived the expectation of thoſe who hoped for fame and immortality from them, have done them no great injuſtice. The moſt

common

common method conſiſted in burying the heroes under little hills which they raiſed in the middle of ſome plain *, and in giving to

* Vide Bartholin. de cauſ. contempt. à Dan. mortis, lib. i. c. 8.

There is room to believe that this cuſtom of burying the dead under little hills or mounts of earth prevailed among many of the ancient inhabitants of Europe. Iſidore ſpeaks of it as a general cuſtom. *Apud majores*, he ſays, *Potentes aut ſub montibus, aut in montibus ſepeliuntur.* (Orig. lib. xv. c. 11.) And Virgil and Servius expreſsly attribute it to the ancient Italians: See Servius on that verſe of Æn. II.

——— *Fuit ingens monte ſub alto*
Regis Dercenni terreno ex aggere buſtum.

This cuſtom Bartholin thinks ODIN brought with him into the North out of Scythia; where it anciently prevailed, as we learn from Herodotus, lib. iv. c. 71. And Mallet aſſures us that ſome travellers "have ſeen "in Crim Tartary (part "of the ancient Scythia) "and in the neighbour-"ing countries, artificial "hills like thoſe which "are found in Denmark "and throughout all the "North." Mallet. *1ſt. Edit.*] See alſo Bell's Travels, vol. i. This Traveller found theſe ſepulchral hills in his journey to China.

We have in England many ancient monuments of this kind, which are of ſuch remote antiquity that it is not eaſy to decide whether they ought to be aſcribed to our Gothic anceſtors the Saxons and Danes; or to the more ancient inhabitants of Celtic race, viz. the Britons, &c. Some antiquaries are for referring every veſtige of this ſort to the times of the Druids: but it is very certain that the ancient Scandinavians buried in the ſame manner: indeed this ſort of monument is ſo ſimple and obvious, that it has doubtleſs prevailed among many nations of very different original.

to theſe hillocks, and ſometimes to the plains themſelves the name of the perſon who was there interred. This rude monument kept up at the ſame time the memory of the hero, and the emulation of the neighbouring inhabitants. We find in Denmark at this day a great number of ſuch artificial hills, which bear the name of ſome warrior, or king of antient times *.

They

Monuments of this kind particularly abound in the ſouth-weſt parts of this iſland. "There are "many in Wiltſhire, "round and copped, "which are called BURROWS or BARROWS; "perhaps raiſed in me- "mory of the ſoldiers "ſlain there: For bones "are found in them; "and I have read that it "was a cuſtom among "the northern people, "that every ſoldier who "ſurvived a battle, "ſhould bring a helmet "full of earth towards "raiſing of monuments "for their ſlain fellows." So far from Cambden: to which Gibſon adds, that "upon theſe downs "[in Wiltſhire] are ſe- "veral ſorts of Barrows. "1. Small circular "trenches with very "little elevation in the "middle. 2. Ordinary "barrows. 3. Barrows "with ditches round "them. 4. Large ob- "long barrows, ſome "with trenches round "them, others without. "5. Oblong barrows "with ſtones ſet up all "round them." Of this laſt ſort "that large "oblong barrow, called "Milbarrow, is more "eſpecially remarkable, "as being environed with "great ſtones about 6 or "7 feet high." Which was doubtleſs "the ſe- "pulchre of ſome Da- "niſh commander."---- Cambden's Britannia by Gibſon, 1722. Vol. i. p. 127, &c. T.

* Of this kind was the tomb of HAMLET as deſcribed by Saxo, *Inſignis ejus ſepulturâ ac nomine campus*

They commonly pitched upon ſome public place, ſome great road, ſome fountain or other well-frequented ſpot, as the moſt proper to raiſe theſe tombs in. They adorned them frequently with one or more large ſtones and epitaphs, as will be explained when I come to ſpeak of the funerals of this people. But above all, they had recourſe to the art of poetry, when they were diſpoſed to immortalize their kings or great captains. The SCALDS or bards were employed to compoſe odes or ſongs, which related all their moſt ſhining exploits, and ſometimes the whole hiſtory of their lives. Theſe ſongs were propagated from one reciter to another: and there was no public ſolemnity in which they were not ſung or chanted. The praiſes which theſe poets gave to valour, the warlike enthuſiaſm which animated their verſes, the great care men took to learn them from their in-

campus apud Jutiam extat, which field we are told is called AMLETS-HEDE to this day. (Saxo. lib. iv. Barthol. p. 119.) In like manner HUBBESTOWE in Devonſhire received its name from HUBBA the Dane, who was ſlain and buried there in the year 879; as an ancient hiſtorian thus relates it, *Dani cadaver* HUBBÆ *inter occiſos invenientes, illud cum clamore maximo ſepelierunt, cumulum apponentes* HUBBELOWE *vocaverunt*. Bromton ad ann. 873. Vid. Cambden. Gibſon. vol. i. p. 47. Barth. lib. i. c. 8. T.

fancy, being all of them the natural effects of the ruling paſſion of this people, ſerved in their turn to ſtrengthen and extend it. Laſtly, the common objects which they uſually had before their eyes, the rocks ſcattered all over the country, the bucklers, the trophies raiſed in the field of battle, the walls and hangings of their houſes, all contributed to preſerve the memory of great actions and intrepid warriors, by means of the Runic characters, the hieroglyphics, and the ſymbols, which were engraven or inſcribed upon them.

A people who nouriſhed ſo ſtrong a paſſion for war, could ſeldom be at loſs for occaſions of it. Accordingly the ancient Scandinavians were continually involved in one hoſtile diſpute or other, and their whole hiſtory would have conſiſted of nothing elſe but melancholy and diſguſting details of theſe wars, if they had been at the needleſs pains to write it. But the little that is left of their hiſtory is more than ſufficient to ſatisfy the curioſity of thoſe who admire courage, no matter with what ſpirit it is animated; and who are aſtoniſhed that men ſhould be ſo prodigal of their lives, when they were ignorant of the art how to render them agreeable. We have already obſerved, that the inhabitants of Germany and the North were accuſtomed

every

every ſpring to hold a general aſſembly, at which every free-man appeared completely armed, and ready to go upon any expedition. At this meeting they conſidered in what quarter they ſhould make war: they examined what cauſes of complaint had been received from the ſeveral neighbouring nations, their power or their riches, the eaſineſs with which they might be overcome, the proſpect of booty, or the neceſſity of avenging ſome injury. When they had determined on the war, and ſettled the plan of the campaign, they immediately began their march, furniſhed each of them with a proper quantity of proviſions; and almoſt every grown man in the country made haſte to join the army thus tumultuouſly aſſembled. We are not to wonder after this, that there ſhould iſſue from the North ſwarms of ſoldiers, as formidable for their numbers as their valour: and we ought not haſtily to conclude from hence, that Scandinavia formerly contained more people than it does at preſent. I know what is related of the incredible multitudes of men, which that country is ſaid to have poured forth: but on the other hand, who does not know how much nations and hiſtorians have been, in all ages, inclined to exaggeration in this reſpect; ſome being deſirous to enhance the power

of their country, and others, when it has been conquered, being willing to ſave its credit by making it yield only to ſuperior numbers; but the greateſt part have been guilty of enlargement from no other motive than a blind love of the marvellous, authoriſed by the difficulty of pronouncing with certainty on a ſubject, in which men often commit great miſtakes even after long reſearches. Beſides this, it is very probable that many particular circumſtances of thoſe famous expeditions made by the Scandinavians, have contributed to countenance that name of *Vagina gentium*, which an hiſtorian gives their country *. For when theſe emigrations were made by ſea, the promptitude and celerity with which they could carry their ravages from one coaſt to another, might eaſily multiply armies in the eyes of the people they at-

* Jornandes de rebus Geticis.——Sir William Temple calls it THE NORTHERN HIVE: and Milton has taken a compariſon from thence to expreſs exuberant multitudes.

" A multitude like which the populous North
" Pour'd never from her frozen loins, to paſs
" Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous ſons
" Came like a deluge on the South, and ſpread
" Beneath Gibraltar to the Lybian ſands."
Par. Loſt. B. I. 351.

T.

tacked,

tacked, and who heard many different irruptions ſpoken of almoſt at the ſame time. If on the contrary, they iſſued forth by land, they found every where on their march nations as greedy of fame and plunder as themſelves, who joining with them, afterwards paſſed for people of the ſame original with the firſt ſwarm which put itſelf in motion. It ſhould alſo be conſidered, that theſe emigrations did not all of them take place at the ſame time; and that after a nation was thus exhauſted, it probably remained inactive until it had been able to recruit its numbers. The vaſt extent of Scandinavia being in thoſe times divided among many different people who were little known and only deſcribed by ſome one general name, as that of Goths, for inſtance, or Normans, ‘(that is Northern men)’ it could not exactly be aſcertained from what country each troop originally came, and ſtill leſs to what degree of depopulation each country was reduced after loſing ſo great a quantity of its inhabitants. But what, in my opinion, beſt accounts for thoſe numerous and frequent inundations of northern people, is that we have reaſon to believe, entire nations often engaged in enterpriſes of this ſort: even the women and children ſometimes marched in the rear of the armies, when a whole people

either by inconſtancy, by indigence, or the attraction of a milder climate, reſolved to change their place of abode. Projects of this kind, it is true, appear very ſtrange to us at preſent: but it is no leſs true that our anceſtors the 'Goths and' Celts often engaged in them. In the time of Cæſar the Helvetians, that is, the ancient inhabitants of Swiſſerland, deſirous to eſtabliſh themſelves in Gaul, burnt their houſes with their own hands, together with ſuch of their effects as were not portable, and followed by their wives and children, ſet out with a reſolution of never more returning home. What a multitude might not one expect ſuch a nation to form? And yet Cæſar remarks * that according to the muſters of the Helvetians themſelves, found in their camp, they did not exceed three hundred and ſixty thouſand in all, including old men, women and children: a number, without diſpute, ſmall compared with that of the inhabitants of the ſame country at preſent. The expedition of the Cimbri had alſo been an entire tranſplantation of that people: for it appears, by the requeſt they made to the Romans, that their view was to obtain new lands to ſettle in. They, as well as the Helvetians, took

* De bello Gallic. lib. i. c. 11.

with them their wives and children: and accordingly Cimbria (at preſent Slefwick and Jutland) continued after this emigration ſo depopulated, that at the end of two whole centuries, viz. in the time of Tacitus, it had not been able to recover itſelf, as we have already remarked from this hiſtorian, who had been himſelf in Germany.

The expedition of the Anglo-Saxons furniſhes us with proofs no leſs convincing than thoſe I have mentioned. The firſt Angles, who paſſed into Britain under the conduct of Hengiſt and Horſa, were a mere handful of men. The ancient Saxon chronicle * informs us, that they had only three veſſels, and it ſhould ſeem that their number could not well exceed a thouſand. Some other ſwarms having afterwards followed their example, their country was reduced to a mere deſert †, and continued deſtitute of inhabitants for more than two centuries; being ſtill in this ſtate in the time of Bede, from whom the author of the Saxon chronicle borrowed this fact. Let any one judge after this, whether it was always out of the ſuperfluity of its inhabitants, as hath been frequently aſſerted, that the North poured forth its

* Chronic. Anglo-Sax. à Gibſon. edit. p. 13.

† See a Note on this ſubject towards the end of the next Chapter. T.

torrents on the countries they overwhelmed. For my part I have not been able to diſcover any proofs that their emigrations ever proceeded from want of room at home: on the contrary, I find enough to convince me that their country could eaſily have received an additional number of inhabitants. When Alboin formed the project of leading the Lombards into Italy, he demanded auxiliaries from the Saxons, his allies. Twenty thouſand Saxons, with their wives and children, accompanied the Lombards into Italy; and the kings of France ſent colonies of Swabians to occupy the country which the Saxons had left deſert. Thus we ſee the Saxons, who are thought to have been one of the moſt numerous people of Germany, could not ſend forth this feeble ſwarm without depopulating their own country: But this is not all. The twenty thouſand Saxons, diſagreeing with the Lombards, quitted Italy, and returned back (undiminiſhed in number) into their own country, which they found poſſeſſed by the Swabians abovementioned. This preſently gave riſe to a war, notwithſtanding all the remonſtrances of the Swabians, who, as an ancient hiſtorian * aſſures us, demonſtrated to the Saxons, that both nations might eaſily ſhare

* Paul. Diacon. de geſt. Longobard. lib. ii. c. 6.

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the country among them, and live all of them in it very commodiouſly. I make no doubt but there were throughout all Saxony, as well as Scandinavia, vaſt tracts of land which lay in their original uncultivated ſtate, having never been grubbed up and cleared. Let any one read the deſcription which Adam of Bremen * gives of Denmark in the eleventh century, and he will be convinced that the coaſts alone were peopled; but that the interior parts formed only one vaſt foreſt.

From what has been ſaid, therefore, I think one may ſafely conclude, that as all were ſoldiers among the ancient Scandinavians, they could eaſily fill all Europe with the noiſe of their arms, and ravage for a long time different parts of it, although the ſum total of the inhabitants ſhould have been much leſs than it is at preſent. If it was otherwiſe, we muſt acknowledge, that this extreme population can be very ill reconciled, either with what hiſtory informs of the manners, cuſtoms and principles of the ancient Scandinavians, or with the ſoundeſt notions of policy with reſpect to what makes the true proſperity of a people. For we cannot allow them ſuch a ſuperiority over us in the number of inhabit-

* Adam Brem. hiſt. eccleſ. Cap. de ſitu Daniæ.

ants, without granting them at the ſame time a proportionable excellence in their cuſtoms, manners, civil regulations, and conſtitution of government, as ſo many efficacious cauſes of the good or bad ſtate of all ſocieties, and conſequently of their greater or leſs degree of population. But who can perſuade himſelf, that thoſe ſavage times when men ſowed and reaped but little; when they had no other choice but that of the deſtructive profeſſion of arms, or of a drowſy indolence no leſs deſtructive; when every petty nation was torn to pieces either by private revenge and factions within, or by war with their neighbours from without; when they had no other ſubſiſtence but rapine, and no other ramparts but wide frontiers laid waſte; who, I ſay, can believe ſuch a ſtate as this to be more favourable to the propagation of the human ſpecies, than that wherein mens goods and perſons are in full ſecurity; wherein the field are covered with labourers, and their cities, rich and numerous, flouriſh in tranquillity; wherein the people are left to breathe during long intervals of peace, and there is never more than a ſmall part of the inhabitants to whom war is deſtructive; and laſtly, wherein commerce, manufactures, and the arts offer ſo many reſources, and ſecond ſo well that natural propenſity to

increaſe

increaſe and multiply, which nothing but the fear of indigence can check and reſtrain.

Let us now conſider in what manner the ancient nations of the North made war. When an army was upon the march, the whole body, as well generals as private ſoldiers, equally deſired to terminate the campaign by ſome ſpeedy and deciſive action. Their numbers, their poverty, the want of proviſions, and of the other precautions obſerved at preſent, did not permit theſe people to wait leiſurely the favourable occaſions of giving battle. The plunder, as it was their principal object, ſo it was generally their greateſt reſource: and they were not of a character to brook either long delays, or ſevere diſcipline, without which all military knowledge is uſeleſs. Naturally impetuous and ardent, they only fought with courage ſo long as the firſt heat of their paſſion continued, and while they were encouraged by the hope of ſpeedy ſucceſs. Whenever they attacked a civilized and warlike people they were always ſure to be defeated ſooner or later, provided the operations were ſlow and cautious. It was thus Marius repaired the repeated loſſes which Rome had ſuffered from the imprudence of the former generals, by only oppoſing to the Cimbri a ſtudied ſlackneſs, which blunted the

edge of their impetuoſity, and threw them into dejection and decay by reducing them to inaction. One need only read the account which the Engliſh hiſtorians give of the irruptions made by the Danes in England, to be convinced that it was rather by ſurprize and ſudden excurſions than by a regular war, that they made a conqueſt of that country. The northern kings, as well as thoſe of the other parts of Europe, had not then any regular troops, excepting perhaps a ſmall number of armed cavalry which ſerved them for guards. When they would raiſe an army, they convoked, as we have ſaid above, a general aſſembly of the free-men of the nation: in this aſſembly they levied ſoldiers, and fixed the number which each farm, village or town was to furniſh. There is room to believe that in Denmark, as in other kingdoms, the ſoldiers received no regular pay; but every one returned home as ſoon as the expedition was finiſhed and the booty divided. Nevertheleſs the more valiant among them, unable to lie inactive, till their own country ſhould offer them new occaſions to enrich and ſignalize themſelves, entered into the ſervice of ſuch other nations as were at war. This was a general cuſtom among all the 'Teutonic and' Celtic nations, and ancient hiſtory affords us a thouſand examples of it. We

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have ſeen the Cimbri aſk the Romans to aſſign them lands, promiſing in return to be always ready to arm themſelves in their quarrels. A long time after we frequently ſee the Goths and Danes in the pay of the Roman emperours. Saxo informs us that in ſucceeding ages the emperours of Conſtantinople intruſted to them the guard of their perſons, and gave them the firſt ranks in their armies *.

It is very difficult to ſay any thing more particular of the Tactics or military art of theſe ancient nations. If we may judge of the Scandinavians by what is related of ſeveral other Celtic people †, we ſhall not form

* Vid. Pontoppidani geſta et veſtig. Dan. extra Dan. tom. i. p. 20.

† Our author goes here upon the miſtaken notion of monſ. Pelloutier, that the CELTS and GOTHS, the GAULS and GERMANS were the ſame people; and therefore in the following lines he applies to the Scandinavians (a Gothic race) what Pelloutier has collected from ancient authors concerning the Gauls and other nations of Celtic origin. (See Pelloutier hiſt. des Celts, lib. ii. c. 15.)——What he ſays below of their blind fury, of their diſorderly way of fighting, and being readily broken after the firſt ſhock, was true of the Gauls, &c, whereas the nations of Teutonic race, as they had leſs vivacity and were leſs choleric, ſo they ſeem to have had more conſtancy and perſeverance, and therefore were reducible to better diſcipline, as our author allows the Scandinavians to have been

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form a very advantageous idea of them in this reſpect. The Greek and Latin hiſtorians repreſent them to us as mad men, who in battle only followed the inſtinct of a blind and brutal rage, without regarding either time or place, or circumſtances. At the firſt ſight of an enemy, they darted down upon them with the rapidity of lightning: their impetuoſity was a mere drunkenneſs or intoxication, which made them march to battle with the moſt extravagant joy: but they marched, we are alſo told, without any order, and often without ever conſidering whether the enemy could be forced in their poſt or not. Hence it frequently happened, that their vigour being exhauſted, it was ſufficient to reſiſt the firſt ſhock, and they were defeated. We muſt nevertheleſs ſuppoſe, that when ſkilful ge-

" when they had ſkilful " generals:" This conceſſion the current of hiſtory extorted from him contrary to his theory. However, as it is the character of all barbarous nations to be eager and furious in their firſt attacks, we may ſuppoſe the ancient Danes and other Gothic nations would not be able to join battle with the ſame cool and deliberate diſcipline, as a civilized people like the Romans did: and this will account for what Plutarch and others tell us of the furious ardor of the Cimbri, (in vit. Marii Flor. III. 3.) and for whatever ſimilar inſtances we find in other authors. Vid. Ammian. Marcellin. XVI. 13. p. 146. T.

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nerals commanded the armies of the Scandinavians, they very well knew how to maintain a proper ſubordination and to moderate that ſenſeleſs fury, which always over-ſhoots the mark it aims at; at leaſt we ſee in the accounts which the ancient chronicles give of their battles, that the authority of their generals was very great, and their orders highly reſpected. It appears alſo to have been their cuſtom to diſpoſe an army in the form of a triangle or pyramid, the point of which was directed againſt the center of the enemy's army. This body was only compoſed of infantry; the cavalry being generally upon a very inconſiderable footing in the North, whether becauſe the country is ſo divided there by mountains and arms of the ſea, or whether becauſe their principal forces were reſerved for the marine *. They had only ſome ſoldiers who ſerved both on foot and horſeback, like our dragoons at preſent, and who were commonly placed in the flanks of their armies. When they were going to join battle, they raiſed great ſhouts, they claſhed their arms together, they invoked with a great noiſe the name of Odin, and ſometimes ſung hymns in his praiſe.

* Dalin. Suea, Rikes hiſt. tom. i. ch. 8.

They made an intrenchment with their baggage round the camp, where the women and children remained during the engagement. The conquered in vain fled there for refuge if they happened to be routed. Moſt commonly the women only waited their coming back to cut them in pieces, and if they could not oblige them to return to battle, they choſe to bury themſelves and their children in one common carnage with their huſbands rather than fall into the hands of a mercileſs conqueror. Such were the dreadful effects of that inhumanity with which war was then carried on. An act of rigour occaſioned an act of cruelty, and this again produced a degree of barbarity ſtill greater. The chains and puniſhments which were reſerved for the vanquiſhed, only ſerved to render the victory the more bloody, and to make it coſt the dearer to thoſe, who purchaſed the honour of deſtroying their fellow-creatures without neceſſity.

Their offenſive weapons were commonly the bow and arrows, the battle-ax, and the ſword. The ſword was ſhort, moſt frequently crooked in the manner of a ſcimetar, and hung to a little belt which paſſed over the right ſhoulder. Yet they ſometimes made uſe of very long ſwords which

which went by a different name *, and theſe were what the Cimbri employed, according to Plutarch. Their champions or heroes took particular care to procure very keen ſwords, which they inſcribed with myſterious characters and called by ſuch names as might inſpire terror. The battle-ax had two edges; when it had a long handle it went by the name of an Halberd †, and was particularly affected by the TRABANTS, or thoſe who ſtood upon guard in the caſtles of their kings ‡. The Scandinavians were reckoned very ſkilful at ſhooting, and accordingly made great uſe of the bow, as we learn from all the ancient chronicles. But beſides theſe arms, ſome warriors employed whatever others they judged moſt proper to ſecond their valour. Thus we ſometimes read of javelins, ſlings,

* The former went by the name of SWERD, whence our Engliſh word SWORD: the latter by that of SPAD or SPADA, a word which is ſtill preſerved in moſt of the ſouthern languages, in the ſame ſenſe.

† The word HALBARD is, I believe, of latter date, tho' it is of Gothic origin, being compounded of the Teutonic, BARDE an Ax, and HALLE a Court; Halberds being the common weapons of guards. (Johnſon's Dict. Junii Etymol.) The weapon itſelf however was probably in uſe from the earlieſt times. T.

‡ TRABANTS (or rather DRABANTS) is the name given to the Yeomen of the Guard in the Northern Courts. T.

clubs ſtuck round with points, lances, and a ſort of daggers. There was no leſs variety in their defenſive arms. Of theſe the ſhield or buckler was the chief *. This moſt commonly was of wood, bark, or leather. The ſhields belonging to warriors of diſtinction were of iron or braſs, ornamented with painting and ſculpture, often finely gilt, and ſometimes plated over with gold or ſilver. We have ſeen what great account the ancient Danes made of their ſhields, and what penalties were reſerved for ſuch as loſt them in battle. Their ſhape and ſize varied much in different countries: the Scandinavians generally had them of a long oval form, juſt the height of the bearer, in order to protect him from arrows, darts and ſtones. They beſides made uſe of them to carry the dead to the grave, to terrify the enemy by claſhing their arms againſt them, to form upon occaſion a kind of ſhelter or tent when they were obliged to encamp in the open field, or when the weather was bad. Nor was the ſhield leſs uſeful in naval encounters; for if the fear of falling into their

* They had two ſorts of theſe, the great Buckler which reſted on the earth and covered the whole body, called in the Daniſh language SKIOLD, the Shield: and a ſmaller kind, or Target, with which they parried the thruſts and blows of the ſword. See Dalin. Suec. Rik. hiſt. tom. i. c. 8. §. 18.

enemies

enemies hands obliged one of their warriors to caſt himſelf into the ſea, he could eaſily eſcape by ſwimming upon his buckler *. Laſtly, they ſometimes made a rampart of their ſhields, by locking them one into another, in the form of a circle; and at the end of a campaign, they ſuſpended them againſt the walls of their houſes, as the fineſt decoration with which they could adorn them.

All theſe uſes which they made of their Shields could not but inſpire the Scandinavians with a high reſpect for this part of their armour. It was the moſt noble manner in which an hero could employ his leiſure, to poliſh his ſhield to the utmoſt brightneſs, and to repreſent upon it either ſome gallant feat, or ſome emblematical figure expreſſive of his own inclinations or exploits: and this ſerved to diſtinguiſh him when, being armed at all points, his hel-

* Vid. Holberg's Dannem. og Norg. Beſkrivelſe. chap. xiii.

Plutarch in his Life of Marius tells us, that the Cimbri, when they were paſſing the Alps, took great delight in climbing up to the tops of the mountains over the ice and ſnow, and there placing their BROAD SHIELDS under their bodies, would ſlide down thoſe vaſt ſlippery deſcents. ——— Travellers inform us, that the ſame method of deſcending thoſe ſnowy ſlopes is practiſed to this day. T.

met hid his face. But then every one could not carry theſe painted or carved ſhields indifferently. When a young warrior was at firſt inliſted, they gave him a white and ſmooth buckler, which was called the "Shield of expectation." This he carried till, by ſome ſignal exploit, he had obtained leave to have proofs of his valour engraven on it: For this reaſon none but princes, or perſons diſtinguiſhed by their ſervices, preſumed to carry ſhields adorned with any ſymbol; the common ſoldiers could not obtain a diſtinction of which the grandees were ſo jealous. Even ſo early as the expedition of the Cimbri, the greateſt part of the army, according to Plutarch, had only white bucklers. In following times, but not till long after, theſe ſymbols which illuſtrious warriors had adopted, paſſing from father to ſon, produced in the North, as well as all over Europe, hereditary coats of arms.

The caſque or helmet was known to the Scandinavians from the moſt early ages. The private ſoldiers had their helmets frequently of leather: thoſe of the officers were of iron, and, if their rank or wealth permitted, of gilded braſs. The coat of mail, the breaſt-plate and back-piece, the armour for the thighs, and other leſs eſſential pieces, were only for ſuch as were able to procure them.

them. Thus, although the invention of all theſe was certainly owing to the Scythians and firſt inhabitants of Europe, few of their deſcendants were for many ages able to obtain them: a ſtriking proof of their indifference, or rather barbarous contempt for all the arts, ſince they cultivated ſo ill even that which was ſo neceſſary to them in battle.

They did not carry to a much greater degree of perfection the art of fortifying or attacking places of defence. Their fortreſſes were only rude caſtles ſituate on the ſummits of rocks, and rendered inacceſſible by thick miſhapen walls. As theſe walls ran winding round the caſtles, they often called them by a name which ſignified SERPENTS or DRAGONS, and in theſe they commonly ſecured the women and young maids of diſtinction, who were ſeldom ſafe at a time when ſo many bold warriors were rambling up and down in ſearch of adventures*. It was this cuſtom which gave occaſion to ancient romancers, who knew not how to deſcribe any thing ſimply, to invent ſo many fables concerning princeſſes of great beauty, guarded by dragons, and afterwards deli-

* See Dalin. Suea Rikes. hiſt. lib. i. ch. 7. §. 20. & tom. i. ch. 6. §. 19. in not.

vered by young heroes, who could not atchieve their reſcue till they had overcome thoſe terrible guards. Theſe rude forts were ſeldom taken by the enemy, unleſs by ſurprize or after a long blockade: however, when theſe were of great importance, they raiſed terraces and artificial banks on that ſide of the fort which was loweſt; and by this means annoyed the beſieged by throwing in arrows, ſtones, boiling water and melted pitch; offenſive arms, which the beſieged, on their part, were not negligent in returning *.

* There is alſo reaſon to believe that the ancient Northern nations were not wholly unacquainted with the uſe of the Catapulta and other engines for battering, darting ſtones, &c. but it is very probable that theſe were not common, and were beſides of very rude and ſimple conſtruction. Vid. Locoen. Antiq. Suev. Goth. lib. iii. c. 2. apud Dalin. Suea. Rik. hiſt.
Firſt Edit.

CHAP-

CHAPTER X.

Of the Maritime Expeditions of the ancient Danes.

HOW formidable ſoever the ancient Scandinavians were by land to moſt of the inhabitants of Europe, it muſt yet be allowed that their maritime expeditions occaſioned ſtill more deſtructive ravages and greater terror. We cannot read the hiſtory of the eighth, the ninth and tenth centuries, without obſerving with ſurprize, the ſea covered with their veſſels, and from one end of Europe to the other, the coaſts of thoſe countries, now the moſt powerful, a prey to their depredations. During the ſpace of two hundred years, they almoſt inceſſantly ravaged England, and frequently ſubdued it. They often invaded Scotland and Ireland, and made incurſions on the coaſts of Livonia, Courland and Pomerania. Already feared, before the time of Charlemagne, they became

ſtill more terrible as ſoon as this great monarch's eyes were cloſed. He is known to have ſhed tears on hearing that theſe barbarians had, on ſome occaſion, defyed his name, and all the precautions he had made to oppoſe them. He foreſaw what his people would ſuffer from their courage under his feeble ſucceſſors. And never was preſage better grounded. They ſoon ſpread, like a devouring flame, over Lower Saxony, Friezeland, Holland, Flanders and the banks of the Rhine as far as Mentz. They penetrated into the heart of France, having long before ravaged the coaſts; they every where found their way up the Somme, the Seine, the Loire, the Garonne and the Rhone. Within the ſpace of thirty years, they frequently pillaged and burnt Paris, Amiens, Orleans, Poitiers, Bourdeaux, Toulouſe, Saintes, Angoulême, Nants, and Tours. They ſettled themſelves in Camargue, at the mouth of the Rhone, from whence they waſted Provence and Dauphiny as far as Valence. In ſhort, they ruined France *, levied immenſe tribute on its monarchs, burnt the palace of Charle-

* See in the Collection of Norman Hiſtorians, compiled by Duchêne, the relation of an ancient anonymous Author; See alſo that of Dudon de St. Quentin, and other ancient writers.

magne

magne at Aix-la-Chapelle, and, in concluſion, cauſed one of the fineſt provinces of the kingdom to be ceded to them. They often carried their arms into Spain, and even made themſelves dreaded in Italy and Greece. In fine, they no leſs infeſted the North than the South with their ineurſions, ſpreading every where deſolation and terror: ſometimes as furiouſly bent on their own mutual deſtruction, as on the ruin of other nations; ſometimes animated by a more pacific ſpirit, they tranſported colonies to unknown or uninhabited countries, as if they were willing to repair in one place the horrid deſtruction of human kind occaſioned by their furious ravages in others.

A people, who are ignorant of manual arts and profeſſions, of juſtice, and of all means of providing for their own ſecurity or ſubſiſtence except by war, never fail to betake themſelves to piracy, if they inhabit a country ſurrounded by the ſea. The Pelaſgi or firſt Greeks were generally pirates and robbers. "Some of them," ſays Thucidides*, "attacked unfortified cities; others, "ſuch as the Carians and Cretans, who "dwelt along the coaſts, fitted out fleets "to ſcour the ſeas." But whereas the

* See Thucid. lib. i. cap. 5.

Greeks are repreſented to us as pirates in the firſt periods of their hiſtory, it is to be obſerved, that the Scandinavians did not become ſo till late. Sidonius Apollinarius, a writer of the fifth century, is, I think, the firſt who mentions the piracy of the Northern nations. He attributes this practice to the Saxons, of whom he draws a frightful picture *. The Danes and Norwegians had not as yet ventured far from their coaſts. I imagine that their neareſt neighbours had not allurements ſufficient to tempt them. The inhabitants of thoſe countries, as poor and warlike as themſelves, were likely to return them blow for blow. Britain and Gaul were too diſtant and too well defended to become the firſt attempt of the Scandinavian ravagers. They began then by arming a few veſſels, with which they plundered the ſtates neareſt to them, and overpowered ſuch few merchant-ſhips as traverſed the Baltic. Inſenſibly enriched by their ſucceſs in little enterprizes, and encouraged to attempt greater, they were at length in a condition to become formi-

* *Eſt Saxonibus piratis cum diſcriminibus pelagi non notitia ſolum ſed familiaritas. . . . . Hoſtis omni hoſte truculentior; improviſus aggreditur, præviſus elabitur, ſpernit objectos, ſternit incautos.* Sidon. Apolin. lib. viii. epiſt. 6.

dable

dable to diſtant nations, ſuch as the Anglo-Saxons, the French, or the Flemings, who all of them poſſeſſed wealth enough to tempt free-booters, and lived under a government too defective and weak to repel them. From that time all this people conceived an amazing fondneſs for maritime expeditions, and towards the beginning of the ninth century, we find theſe adventurers vaſtly encreaſed, who, by a ſtrange aſſociation of ideas, imagined they acquired eternal glory, by committing every where, without any pretext, the moſt horrible violence.

In proportion as the diviſions, incapacity and imprudence of Charlemagne's ſucceſſors weakened their governments, the Scandinavians, encouraged by their growing wealth, conſtantly fitted out ſtill more numerous fleets. "The French monar-" chy," ſays an author of that age *, "la-" bouring under the weight of a bad in-" terior

* Auctor Vitæ Sti. Genulfi, lib. xi.——— The Scandinavians had already, before the time of Charlemagne, found their way into the neighbouring ſeas: but this prince having had the precaution to ſtation ſhips of war at the mouths of all the great rivers throughout his empire, and to cauſe an exact diſcipline to be obſerved along the coaſts, they were obliged to keep within the limits he preſcribed them ſo long as he reigned, which was from

" terior policy, hath been obliged to leave " the ſeas expoſed to the barbarous fury " of the Normans." The mal-adminiſtration of the Saxon kings of England produced the ſame effect in that iſland, now ſo reſpectable for its naval power. Both the one and the other had the dangerous imprudence to purchaſe peace from theſe pirates; which was not only putting arms into the hands of the enemy, but was alſo attended with this further inconvenience, that the commanders in theſe expeditions, who had no authority over each other, only conſidered themſelves as bound by their own ſeparate engagements; ſo that thoſe harraſſed nations were no ſooner freed, by dint of money, from one ſet of ravagers, than another ſucceeded, ready to attack them with the ſame impetuoſity, if they were not appeaſed by the ſame means. The better to account for that ſtrange facility with which the Scandinavians ſo long plundered, and ſo frequently conquered the Anglo-Saxons and the French, we muſt remark, that their cruelty, which

from A. D. 768 to 814. But they quickly found under his feeble ſucceſſors that they might ſcour the ſeas with the ſame impunity, they had done before his time. *1ſt edit.*

gave

gave no quarter, and which occaſioned thoſe ſad lamentations ſo well known *, had impreſſed theſe nations with ſuch terror, that they were half vanquiſhed at their very appearance. Beſides, there was no contending with an enemy who did not make war, like regular forces, on any direct and conſiſtent plan, but by ſudden eruptions in a hundred places at once, as expeditious in retreating to their ſhips where they met with reſiſtance, as in darting down upon the coaſts where they found them quiet and defenceleſs. It is, nevertheleſs, probable, that a wiſe and well-ordered government might have remedied all theſe evils: and in fact that it did ſo, we have an inconteſtible proof in the conduct of the great ALFRED, under whoſe reign the Danes were obliged to leave England unmoleſted. But what appears an eaſy matter to us, at this time, required in thoſe ages of ignorance and confuſion, the uncommon genius of an Alfred to accompliſh.

* The Monks inſerted it as a petition in the Litany, *A furore Normannorum, libera nos, Domine.* ——The French called theſe adventurers in general NORMANS, *i. e.* Northern-men: which afterwards became the proper name of the colony that ſettled in Neuſtria; whoſe hiſtory is given below. T.

If we reflect on the interior ſtate of Scandinavia, during the times that its inhabitants were ſo unfortunately famous, we ſhall ſoon ſee the cauſe of that amazing exterior power which they poſſeſſed. I have before obſerved, that they neglected agriculture, which, among a thouſand other good effects, extinguiſhes in a riſing people the reliſh for ſavage life, and inſpires them with the love of peace and juſtice, without which the cultivation of their lands is uſeleſs. Their flocks being almoſt their only income, they were neither obliged to a conſtant abode on the ſame ſpot, nor to wait for the time of harveſt, and conſequently ſuch a people, though in fact but few, were able, on ſhort notice, to levy numerous armies. Moſt of them brought up in a maritime country, and inured to the ſea from their childhood, had no fear of the dangers, or rather knew not that there were dangers of any kind attending ſuch a life. What a boundleſs field for conqueſts was here opened by the ſole advantage of navigation! What a free ſcope was here afforded a warlike people to ſpread univerſally the terror of their arms! The profeſſion of piracy was ſo far from appearing diſgraceful to them, that it was in their eyes the certain road to honours and to fortune: for it was wiſely contrived

that

that the word HONOUR, to which ſo many different ideas are annexed, was among them ſolely confined to a diſregard of dangers. Hence it is, that in the ancient chronicles, more than one hero boaſts of being the moſt renowned pirate in the North; and that often the ſons of the great lords and kings made cruizing voyages in their youth, in order to render themſelves illuſtrious, and to become one day worthy of command. This is what we ſee happen very frequently after Harold Harfagre had once made himſelf maſter of all Norway, which before his time was divided into ſeveral petty kingdoms. Many princes, dukes or earls, ſeeing themſelves thus ſtripped of their poſſeſſions, retired into Iceland, the Orkneys, the iſles of Faro and Shetland, and thence covering the ſea with their veſſels, infeſted all the coaſts of Scandinavia; where for many ages there was no ſailing with any ſafety. Adam of Bremen, who travelled through Denmark ſome time after Chriſtianity was received there, gives a very affecting deſcription of the deſolations they made in that kingdom *. Nor were they in reality leſs formidable in the North, than to France or England. The coaſts of Denmark, Sweden

* Vid. Adam Brem. de ſitu Dan. paſſim.

and Norway were obliged to be under conſtant guard. They encreaſed ſo much, that on ſome occaſions, and particularly under king Regner Lodbrog, the Danes were perhaps more numerous on ſea than on land: ſo that the whole nation, according to the account of an ancient hiſtorian, wore nothing but the habits of ſailors, that they might be ready to embark on the firſt ſignal *.

As ſoon as a prince had attained his eighteenth or twentieth year, he commonly requeſted of his father a ſmall fleet completely fitted out, in order to atchieve with his followers ſome adventure that might be productive of glory and ſpoil. The father applauded ſuch an inclination in his ſon, as indicating a riſing courage and heroic mind. He gave him ſhips, the commander and crew of which mutually engaged not to return, unleſs adorned with laurels and loaded with plunder. That nation became the firſt object of their reſentment, from whom they had received any injury; and frequently their principal aim was to make reprizals on ſome province which ſerved for the retreat of other corſairs. If the fleets of two different nations met by chance in their voyage, this

* Arnold. Lubeck. Chronic.

was alſo an occaſion of fighting which they never neglected.

The vanquiſhed party was commonly put to death, though ſometimes the conquerors were contented to make them ſlaves; and often, by a ſingular ſtrain of generoſity, which the love of glory was able to produce in minds in other reſpects ſo ferocious, if the enemy that fell in their way had fewer ſhips than themſelves, they ſet aſide part of their own veſſels, that ſo, engaging upon equal terms, the victory might not be attributed to ſuperiority of numbers *. Many of them alſo regarded it as diſhonourable to ſurprize the enemy by night. Sometimes the chiefs thought it beſt to decide the diſpute by ſingle combat; in this caſe they landed on the neareſt ſhore: if one of them happened to be diſarmed or thrown down, he frequently refuſed to receive quarter, and was killed on the ſpot: but if he had defended himſelf gallantly, the victor granted him his life, demanded his friendſhip, adopted him for a kind of Foſter-brother †, and they mutually ſwore to preſerve an eternal

* So it happened in an engagement between two heroes, who are mentioned in an old Icelandic chronicle called Torſtein Wikinga Saga.

† Foſter-broder, *Danicè*.

friendſhip. In token of this alliance the two heroes made inciſions in their hands or arms, and beſmeared their weapons with the blood, or mixing it in a cup, each of them covering their heads with a ſod, drank of it, ſwearing that the death of the firſt of them who fell in battle ſhould not paſs unrevenged. Many of theſe piratical princes, whom ſucceſs and cuſtom had attached and habituated to this profeſſion, never quitted it, but gloried in paſſing the remainder of their lives on board their ſhips. We meet with them ſometimes, in their ancient hiſtories, boaſting that they never repoſed under an immoveable roof, nor drank BEER in peace by their fire-ſide *.

The veſſels of theſe corſairs were always well provided with offenſive arms, ſuch as ſtones, arrows, cables, with which they overſet ſmall veſſels, and grapling irons to board them, &c. Every individual was ſkilful in ſwimming, and as their engagements were ſeldom far diſtant from the ſhore, the vanquiſhed party often ſaved themſelves by ſwimming to land. Each band had its own peculiar ſtations, ports, places of rendezvous, and magazines: and many cities in the North owe their preſent

* Dalin. Sue. Rik. hiſt. tom. i. c. 4. §. 8.

proſperity

proſperity to the advantage they had of affording them retreats. Such was Lunden in Scania, which, according to Adam of Bremen *, contained great riches laid up there by the pirates: and for a long time the kings themſelves countenanced and ſhared their plunder, by ſelling them the liberty of retiring into their harbours.

The manner in which the lands were parcelled out in Denmark and Norway evidently ſhews, that every thing there was directed towards this one end of having a powerful maritime force. Each diviſion, whether more or leſs conſiderable, derived its name from the number of veſſels it was capable of fitting out, and theſe names ſtill ſubſiſt in ſome places. In the hiſtory of Denmark may be ſeen the particular taxes impoſed on each province for that purpoſe, and the number of ſhips of which their fleets were compoſed. At firſt they were inconſiderable, but in proportion as the chiefs who followed this piratical profeſſion were enriched by it, the northern ſeas were ſeen covered with one or two hundred veſſels or ſtill more numerous ſquadrons. We read in hiſtory of a fleet of ſeven hundred ſhips, commanded by HAROLD BLAATAND king of Den-

* Vid. Adam Brem. de ſit. Dan. cap. cxxiii.

mark, and a Norwegian lord named count HACON. This number is no greater than what we often find in the fleets under the following reigns, and beſides it is certain, that the veſſels of which it conſiſted, were but ſmall. The firſt we hear of were only a kind of twelve-oared barks; they were afterwards built capable of containing one hundred or a hundred and twenty men, and theſe were very common in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The northern kings alſo ſometimes conſtructed veſſels of an extraordinary ſize, but theſe were rather for ſhew than defence. Such was that of Harold Harfagre: a long ſhip which the chronicles mention with admiration, under the name of the DRAGON. King Olave Tryggueſon had one of the ſame kind, named the LONG SERPENT: the chronicles ſay it was very long, large and high, and of a moſt durable conſtruction; a wooden ſerpent was carved on its poop, and both that and its prow were gilded. It carried thirty four banks of rowers, and was, they add, the fineſt and largeſt ſhip that had been ever ſeen in Norway *.

* See a Diſſertation of baron Holberg's inſerted in the 3d tome of Memoirs of the Society of Sciences in Denmark, intitled "Danmarks og Norges Soe Hiſtoire:" See alſo Torfæus's hiſt. of Norway in the Life of HAROLD and of OLAVE, &c. *Firſt Edit.*

Theſe

These piratical expeditions were not always confined to the devastation of some province, or to a few naval engagements; events which producing no farther consequence than the immediate misfortune of the people who then suffered by them, were soon forgot by posterity. I should digress from the purpose of this introduction, were I to relate all the Conquests made by the inhabitants of the North in their cruizing voyages. I will only take notice of the emigration of the ANGLES, who along with the SAXONS, invaded Britain in the fifth century, and gave it their name. As for the rest, I shall only borrow from the old chronicles some facts and relations little known to strangers, but which will afford the best idea of the maritime power of these ancient Scandinavians, formerly dreaded by so many nations.

It is well known, that the Britons, unable to defend themselves from the northern inhabitants of their isle, sought for assistance from the Danes and Saxons, their allies. The ancient Saxon chronicle, published by Gibson *, informs us, that those people who went over and settled in Britain, were originally of three different countries. One party of them were the ancient SAXONS,

* Chronic. Saxon. p. 12, et seq.

that is to ſay, the people of Lower Saxony; another were the ANGLES or Engliſh, who inhabited that part of the duchy of Sleſwic in the neighbourhood of Flenſbourg, ſtill called Angelen, and were conſequently Danes. Laſtly, there paſſed over into Britain alſo a conſiderable number of JUTES, which is the name given at this day to the inhabitants of Jutland. The Saxons occupied the provinces named, after them, ESSEX, WESTSEX*, SUSSEX, and MIDDLESEX. "The ANGLES," continues the author of that chronicle, "left their own "country totally deſerted †, and ſo it ſtill "continues.

* WESTSEX, or the Weſt-Saxon kingdom contained Hampſhire, Berks, Wilts, Somerſet, Dorſet, &c. T.

† We ſhall not wonder at this, if we recollect that they did not ſo much conquer the BRITONS, as extirpate and expel them, and that they entirely new-peopled three-fourths of this large iſland. That the SAXONS ſuffered few or none of the old inhabitants to remain among them, appears from their adopting ſcarce any of their cuſtoms, laws, or language: hardly retaining ſo much as their names of places. All which they would inſenſibly have done more or leſs had the conquered Britons remained among them, tho' in the loweſt ſtate of ſervitude. For it is always ſeen that the conquerors gradually aſſume the language and manners of the conquered, where the latter are moſt numerous though never ſo much depreſſed, provided they intermix with them. Thus the Norwegians, under ROLLO, when they had conquered

" continues. This country is ſituated be-
" tween Saxony and Jutland. Their leaders
" were Hengiſt and Horſa, who derived their
" pedigree from Odin, as do all our kings.
" From the Angles deſcended all the in-
" habitants of the eaſt and ſouthern parts
" of England, as well as thoſe of Mercia *
" and Northumberland. The Jutes or
" Jutlanders poſſeſſed only Kent and the
" iſle of Wight." Thus although this people were not yet known by the name of Danes, it is evident, that at leaſt two thirds of the conquerors of Great Britain came from Denmark: ſo that when the Danes again infeſted England about three or four hundred years after, and finally conquered it toward the latter end of the tenth cen-

conquered Normandy, quickly imbibed the French manners and language: Thus the ſame Normans, when about two centuries after they conquered England, in vain endeavoured to make their Norman-French the national language, and to eſtabliſh the Norman laws; in the courſe of one or two reigns, the laws, manners, and ſpeech of the Engliſh had gradually recovered the ſuperiority, and were adopted by the conquerors themſelves and their deſcendants. T.

* MERCIA, or (as the old Engliſh name was) MERCH-LAND contained 17 counties, viz. Oxford, Glouceſter, Salop, Cheſhire, &c. It was called Merch-land, becauſe it was every way bounded by MARCHES, or lands bordering on other kingdoms: It no where verged on the ſea. T.

tury, they waged war with the deſcendants of their own anceſtors.

A particular event ſerved to rekindle that ſpirit of rapine and conqueſt which had already been ſo fatal to this iſland. Harold Harfagre having (as I ſaid above) compleated the conqueſt of Norway about the year 870, and being deſirous of procuring that repoſe for ſuch of his ſubjects as dwelt along the coaſts, which they themſelves would not grant to their neighbours, prohibited all pirates of Norway, under the ſevereſt penalties, from exerciſing any hoſtilities againſt their own country †. But notwithſtanding this prohibition a Norwegian duke ‡, named ROLF or ROLLO, ſprung, as it is ſaid, from the ancient kings of Norway, made a deſcent on the province of Viken, nor retired thence till laden with a great booty of cattle. Harold, who was in the neighbourhood, was enraged at Rollo to the laſt degree, for thus daring to diſobey him almoſt in his very preſence, and inſtantly condemned him to perpetual baniſhment from Norway. In

† Torfæi hiſt. Norveg. tom. II. lib. II. Ejuſd. Diſſertat. de Gaungo Rolfo. p. 80.

‡ Called in their own language JARL, a title of the ſame original and import, as our Anglo-Saxon EARL. T.

vain

vain the mother of this unfortunate youth threw herſelf at the king's feet, imploring pardon for her ſon, and chanting, according to the cuſtom of thoſe times, theſe verſes, which the chronicles have preſerved to us: "Is the very name of our race become hateful to you? You drive from his country one of the greateſt men it has ever produced, the honour of the Norwegian nobility. Ah! why will you provoke the wolf to devour the flocks, who wander defenceleſs through the woods? Fear, leſt becoming outrageous, he ſhould one day occaſion great misfortunes." The king remained inflexible, and Rollo perceiving that he was for ever cut off from all hopes of return to his own country, retired with his fleet among the iſlands of the Hebrides to the north-weſt of Scotland, whither the flower of the Norwegian nobility had fled for refuge ever ſince Harold had become maſter of the whole kingdom. He was there received with open arms by thoſe warriors, who, eager for conqueſt and revenge, waited only for a chief to undertake ſome glorious enterprize. Rollo ſetting himſelf at their head, and ſeeing his power formidable, ſailed towards England, which had been long as it were a field open on all ſides to the violences of the northern nations. But the great Alfred had ſome

years before eſtabliſhed ſuch order in his part of the iſland, that Rollo, after ſeveral fruitleſs attempts, deſpaired of forming there ſuch a ſettlement as ſhould make him amends for the loſs of his own country. He pretended therefore to have had a ſupernatural dream, which promiſed him a glorious fortune in France, and which ſerved at leaſt to ſupport the ardour of his followers. The weakneſs of the government in that kingdom, and the confuſion in which it was involved, were ſtill more perſuaſive reaſons to aſſure them of ſucceſs. Having therefore ſailed up the Seine to Rouen, he immediately took that capital of the province, then called NEUSTRIA, and making it his magazine of arms, he advanced up to Paris, to which he laid ſiege in form. The events of this war properly belong to the hiſtory of France, and all the world knows, that it at length ended in the entire ceſſion of Neuſtria, which Charles the Simple was obliged to give up to Rollo and his Normans, in order to purchaſe a peace. Rollo received it in perpetuity to himſelf and his poſterity, as a feudal duchy dependant on the crown of France *. A deſcription of the interview

* This famous treaty was concluded at S. Clair, A. D. 912, by which K. Charles agreed to give his daughter

interview between Charles and this new duke, gives us a curious picture of the manners of theſe NORMANS, (as they were called by foreigners:) for the latter would not take the oath of fealty to his ſovereign lord, any other way than by placing his hands within thoſe of the king; and abſolutely refuſed to kiſs his feet, as cuſtom then required. It was with great difficulty he was prevailed on to let one of his warriors perform this ceremony in his ſtead; but the officer to whom Rollo deputed this ſervice, ſuddenly raiſed the king's foot ſo high, that he overturned him on his back; a piece of rudeneſs which was only laughed at; to ſuch a degree were the Normans feared and Charles deſpiſed *.

Soon after, Rollo was perſuaded to embrace Chriſtianity, and he was baptized with much ceremony by the archbiſhop of Rouen in the cathedral of that city. As ſoon as he ſaw himſelf in full poſſeſſion of Normandy, he exhibited ſuch virtues as rendered the province happy, and deſerved

daughter Giſele in marriage to Rollo, together with that part of Neuſtria ſince called Normandy, upon condition that he would do homage for it, and would embrace the Chriſtian religion. (Vid. Abrege Chronologique de l'hiſt. de France, par M. Henault.) T.

* Wilhelm. Gemmet. lib. ii. c. 11.

to make his former outrages forgotten. Religious, wiſe, and liberal, this captain of pirates became, after Alfred, the greateſt and moſt humane prince of his time. Far from treating Normandy as a conquered province, his whole attention was employed to re-eſtabliſh it. This country was, by the frequent devaſtations of the Scandinavians, rendered ſo deſert and uncultivated, that Rollo could not at firſt reſide in it; but Charles was obliged to yield up Britanny to him for a while, till Normandy was in a condition to furniſh ſubſiſtence to its new maſters. Nevertheleſs, the fertility of the ſoil, ſeconding the induſtry of the people, it became, in a few years, one of the fineſt provinces of Europe. Thus it was that this prince, afterwards known under the name of ROLLO or RAOUL I. ſecured to his children this noble poſſeſſion, which they, two hundred years afterwards, augmented by the conqueſt of England: As if it were deſtined that this iſland ſhould at all times receive its ſovereigns from among the northern nations. As to the French hiſtorians, they agree with the Icelandic chronicles, in deſcribing Rollo as a man of uncommon wiſdom and capacity; generous, eloquent, indefatigable, intrepid, of a noble figure and majeſtic ſize. Many other Scandinavian princes and captains are drawn in

the

the ſame colours. Such were Harold Harfagre, Olave Tryggueſon, Magnus king of Norway, Canute the Great, &c. men born with truly heroic qualities, which they alas! degraded by injuſtice and inhumanity: but who wanted only another age and another education to render them moſt accompliſhed perſons.

CHAPTER XI.

Sequel of the maritime expeditions of the ancient Danes and Norwegians. The diſcovery of Iceland and Greenland, and of an unknown country, called Vinland.

IT was not by this expedition alone, important as it might be, that the Norwegians were diſtinguiſhed under the reign of HAROLD HARFAGRE. The ambition of that prince gave birth to a conqueſt of a more peaceable kind, which though little known to the reſt of the world, had yet very intereſting conſequences in the hiſtory of the North. For, not ſatisfied with having happily ſubdued the little tyrants who had for a long time weakened and diſtreſt Norway, he was diſpoſed to exerciſe ſuch abſolute authority over his ſubjects, as, far from ſubmitting to, they had not even a name for it. The greateſt part of the Norwegian nobility perceiving that it was in vain to oppoſe their ſtrength to his, determined

mined to abandon a country, where they were obliged to live depreſſed, impoveriſhed and obſcure. Ingulph was one of the firſt who went into this voluntary exile. It is, indeed, ſaid, that the apprehenſion of being puniſhed for a murder he had committed, was, equally with the tyranny of Harold, a motive for his flight; but this latter inducement was certainly what engaged a multitude of noble families of Norway to join him *. Theſe illuſtrious fugitives being imbarked, Ingulph, whom they had choſen for their leader, conducted them, in the year 874, to Iceland, which muſt certainly have been long before known to a people who were ſuch expert ſailors, though they had never yet thought of ſending colonies thither. As ſoon as they diſcovered it at a diſtance, Ingulph, according to an ancient and ſuperſtitious cuſtom, threw a wooden door into the ſea, determining to land where the Gods ſhould ſeem to point out, by the direction of this floating guide; but the waves carrying it out of ſight, after a fruitleſs ſearch, they were obliged to diſembark in a gulph toward the ſouth part of the iſland, which ſtill bears Ingulph's name. Hiorleif,

* Arngrim. Jon. Crymogæa, ſive de reb. Iſland. lib. iii. Hamb. 1593.

his brother-in-law ſettled in another part. They both found the iſland uninhabited and uncultivated, but covered with thick foreſts of birch-trees, through which they could not penetrate, but by cutting their way before them. There are now no foreſts in Iceland, nor any birch-trees, except here and there a few ſhort and ſlender ſhrubs: but the trees that are ſtill found deep buried in the earth, and frequently among the rocks, ſhould prevent our too haſtily rejecting the evidence of the ancient chronicles, when they deſcribe the country as different from what it is at preſent *. The Norwegian adventurers imagined that this iſland had been formerly inhabited, or at leaſt that people had landed on the

* Vid. ARNGRIM. JON. Crymogæa. lib. i. c. 2. p. 21.—TORFÆUS remarks the ſame thing. "Should any one object, (ſays he) that modern Iceland does not anſwer the ancient deſcriptions of it, it may be juſtly anſwered, that this country has greatly degenerated. This I can affirm, from what I have been an eye-witneſs of myſelf: I have ſeen in my youth great alterations in the face of this country; ſhores ſwallowed, and others thrown up by the violence of the waves; meadows formerly fruitful, now buried under vaſt heaps of ſand; plains all covered and vallies filled up with ſtones and ſand brought down by the torrents of melted ſnow," &c. Vide Torfæi hiſt. Norveg, tom. i. c. 5. p. 12.

ſhore,

ſhore, as Ingulph found there wooden croſſes, and other little pieces of workmanſhip, after the manner of the Iriſh and Brittons. Theſe people had embraced Chriſtianity before that time, and very poſſibly ſome of their fiſhermen thrown upon the coaſts, might have left a few of their effects behind them. On this ſuppoſition, that Iceland had not been inhabited before the ninth century, it could not poſſibly be the THULE of which the ancients ſpeak ſo often; and what Procopius and others have written of it, ſeems rather applicable to the northern provinces of Scandinavia *.

The ſucceſs of Ingulph's expedition being much talked of in Norway, other families were eager to fly to this place of refuge from the ambitious encroachments of their king. The Icelandic annals are very exact in relating the names of theſe adventurers, the ſeveral numbers of which they conſiſted, together with the names of the places where they ſettled, which, for

* All that can, with any certainty, be ſaid of this *Ultima Thule* of the ancients, is, that they called by that name the fartheſt country which they could diſcover to the North; or in general ſome very northern country. Indeed it appears, that they applied this name at different times to the iſles of Shetland, Faro, the Orkneys, Norway, Iceland, Lapland, &c.

the moſt part, are ſtill retained. All the other circumſtances of theſe voyages are handed down with equal preciſion, and we may confidently aſſert, that the ancient hiſtory of Iceland is more compleat than that of any other country in Europe. The ſeveral particulars and the ſequel of the event are foreign to this work; we need only obſerve, that this Icelandic colony carried with them a violent hatred for arbitrary power, and bravely perſerved their liberty and independance againſt every attempt to deprive them of thoſe bleſſings. This was endeavoured by ſeveral Norwegian princes in vain; ſo that it was full four hundred years before this republic became ſubject to Norway, along with which it was afterwards united to the crown of Denmark.

About a century after the diſcovery of Iceland, a Norwegian nobleman, called TORWALD, having been exiled for killing a perſon in a duel, retired thither, along with his ſon ERIC, ſurnamed RUFUS, or the RED *. Torwald dying there, his ſon was ſoon after, for a ſimilar accident, obliged to withdraw from this iſland. Not knowing where to fly for refuge, neceſſity

* Vid. Torfæi Groenland. Antiq. deſcript. Haun. 1708.

determined

determined him to attempt the diſcovery of a coaſt, to the north of Iceland, which had been before deſcryed by a Norwegian voyager. His ſearch proved ſucceſsful, and he landed there in the year 982. He ſettled at firſt on a little iſland that formed a ſtrait, which he called, after his own name, ERIC-SUND, and there paſſed the winter. In the ſpring he went to ſurvey the main land, and finding it covered with a pleaſing verdure, gave it the name it ſtill bears of GROENLAND or GREENLAND *. After living there ſome years, he returned to Iceland, and prevailed on ſeveral perſons to go and ſettle in this new country. He deſcribed it as a land abounding in excellent paſturage, in furs and

* GROENLAND is, in the northern languages, exactly equivalent to our Engliſh word GREENLAND. An old Icelandic hiſtorian tells us, that ERIC gave the country this alluring name, in order to captivate and invite the northern people to come and ſettle there. (*Vid. Arii Polyhiſt. libellus de Is-landia, c. 6. p. 33.*) The name however was not altogether without foundation; for though Greenland is in the inner parts a high mountainous country, covered perpetually with ice and ſnow; yet on the ſea-coaſts, and in the bays and inlets are found very good meadows and paſtures; or at leaſt what might be deemed ſuch by natives of Iceland and Norway. See EGEDE's "Natural Hiſt. of Green-"land." Lond. 1745. p. 4, 12, 44, &c. T.

game, having a coaſt well ſupplied with fiſh. Returning back with his Icelanders, he applied himſelf to render this infant colony flouriſhing and proſperous.

Some years after, LEIF, the ſon of ERIC, having made a voyage to Norway, met with a favourable reception from king Olave Trygueſon, to whom he painted out Greenland in the moſt advantageous colours. Olave, newly become a convert to Chriſtianity, was animated with the warmeſt zeal to propagate through the North the religion he had embraced. He detained Leif therefore at his court during the winter, and was ſo good an advocate for the Chriſtian doctrines that he perſuaded his gueſt to be baptized. In the ſpring he ſent him to Greenland, attended by a prieſt, who was to confirm him in his faith, and endeavour to get it received into the new colony. Eric was at firſt offended at his ſon's deſerting the religion of his anceſtors, but was at length appeaſed; and the miſſionary, with the aſſiſtance of Leif, ſoon brought over the whole ſettlement to the knowledge of the true God. Before the end of the tenth century there were churches in Greenland, and a biſhoprick had been erected in the new town of GARDE, the capital of the country, whither the Norwegians traded for many years.

years. The Greenlanders ſoon after encreaſing, founded another little town called ALBE, and a monaſtery dedicated to St. Thomas. Arngrim Jonas has preſerved a liſt of the biſhops of Garde: they were ſuffragans to the archbiſhop of Drontheim. The Greenlanders acknowledged the kings of Norway for their ſovereigns, and paid them an annual tribute, from which they in vain endeavoured to free themſelves in the year 1261. This colony ſubſiſted till about the year 1348, which was the æra of a dreadful peſtilence, known by the name of the BLACK DEATH, that made terrible devaſtation in the North. From that time *, both the colony at Garde and

* Though the peſtilence above-mentioned might contribute to the ruin of the colony, and to cut off its intercourſe with Norway; yet EGEDE aſſures us, that it ſtill ſubſiſted and maintained ſome correſpondence with the mother-country until the year 1406, when the laſt biſhop was ſent over to Greenland. The ſame author attributes the neglect and loſs of that ancient colony to the diſturbances in the North, occaſioned partly by change and tranſlation of the government in queen Margaret's reign (about the beginning of the 15th century) and partly by the continual wars, that followed between the Swedes and Danes, which cauſed the navigation to thoſe parts to be laid aſide: to which a natural cauſe has alſo probably contributed, viz. that the ſeas on the eaſtern coaſt, which were formerly open,

and that at Albe, with all the other Norwegian ſettlements on the eaſtern coaſt of Greenland, have been ſo totally forgotten and neglected, that we are utterly ignorant what became of them. All the endeavours which have been uſed ſince, have only tended to the diſcovery of the weſtern ſhore, where in the preſent age the Danes have made four new ſettlements. The Icelandic chronicles unanimouſly atteſt, that the ancient Norwegians eſtabliſhed a colony alſo on the weſtern coaſt; but as no remains of it are now extant, many people ſuſpected the veracity of thoſe hiſtorians on this head, and conſequently on many others. At length they have recovered all the authority they were in danger of loſing. It is not long ſince the Daniſh miſſionaries diſcovered along this coaſt the ruins of large ſtone houſes, of churches built in the form of a croſs, and fragments of broken bells; they have alſo diſcovered that the ſavage inhabitants of the country have preſerved a diſtinct remembrance of thoſe ancient Norwegians, of the places where they dwelt,

are now cloſed up with almoſt perpetual ſhoals of ice, ſo as to render it inacceſſible. EGEDE, however, offers proofs that the old colony is not wholly extinct, and even propoſes means of getting to them. See his Hiſt. of Greenland, chap. ii, &c. T.

their

their cuſtoms, the quarrels their anceſtors had with them, and of the war which ended in the deſtruction of thoſe ſtrangers *.

We ought not, after this, to doubt what the ſame chronicles tell us concerning other colonies, founded at the ſame time, and particularly thoſe in the eaſtern part of Greenland. The diſcovery of ſuch an ancient ſettlement cannot fail of being a juſt object of curioſity. It is true indeed, that ſeveral unſucceſsful attempts were made towards it in the laſt age; but were they ſo well directed, as to bar all future hopes? The moſt intelligent perſons are of opinion, that they were not. We may therefore expect that an attentive government will ere long ſurmount all the obſtacles which have hitherto oppoſed ſo intereſting a diſcovery.

The Scandinavians, now maſters of the northern ocean, and fluſhed with ſucceſs, became poſſeſſed, at different times, of all the iſlands in thoſe ſeas. Thus, while the Danes were reducing England, the Norwegians conquered a conſiderable part of

* See EGEDE's deſcription of Greenland, p. 6. and particularly the whole 2d chapter. — The ſame author tells us, that in the language of the native Greenlanders are found at this day many Norwegian words. See ch. xvii. p. 163.

Scotland, and peopled the Orkneys, the Hebrides, the iſlands of Faro and Shetland; in moſt of which the Norwegian language is ſpoken to this day. Towards the end of the eleventh century, Magnus, the ſon of Olave, one of their princes, filled that part of the world with the renown of his arms. Ordericus Vitalis, whoſe acknowledged veracity in the hiſtories of France and England, may ſerve to eſtabliſh that of our old Icelandic chronicles, with which he perfectly agrees, relates, that "in the fifth year of the reign of William "Rufus, king of England *, Magnus king "of Norway viſited the Orkneys, and made "a tour through part of Scotland, and "all the iſlands in thoſe ſeas that be-"longed to him, as far as Angleſey. He "ſettled colonies in the Iſle of Man, "which was then a deſart, commanded "them to build houſes, and took care "they ſhould be provided with neceſſaries "of every kind. He afterwards made a "progreſs through ſeveral other iſlands in "the great ocean, which are, in a manner, "beyond the limits of the world; and, "exerting his royal authority, obliged ſe-"veral people to go and inhabit them.

* This was in the year 1092. Vid. Orderic. Vital. Hiſt. eccleſ. lib. x.

With

"With the ſame earneſtneſs did this prince "apply himſelf for many years to increaſe "his ſubjects and enlarge his empire." But if in an age when ignorance overſpread the whole face of Europe; when the aim of governments was little more than ſelf-defence; and when rapine and bloodſhed compoſed the moſt memorable events of hiſtory; if we are ſurprized to find, in ſuch an age, colonies founded and unknown regions explored, by a people who are conſidered as farther removed than other nations from civility and ſcience; how will our ſurprize be encreaſed when we find them opening a way into that new world, which many ages after occaſioned ſuch a change among us, and reflected ſo much glory on its diſcoverers. Strange as this may appear, the fact becomes indiſputable, when we conſider that the beſt authenticated Icelandic chronicles unanimouſly affirm it, that their relations contain nothing that can admit of doubt, and that they are ſupported by ſeveral concurrent teſtimonies. This is an event too intereſting and too little known, not to require a circumſtantial detail. I ſhall proceed then, without any previous reflections, to relate the principal circumſtances, as I find them in the Treatiſe of Ancient Vinland, written by Torfæus; and in the hiſtory

of Greenland by Jonas Arngrim; two Icelandic authors of undoubted credit, who have faithfully copied the old hiſtorians of their own country *.

There was, ſay thoſe ancient chronicles, an Icelander, named HERIOL, who along with his ſon BIARN, made every year a trading voyage to different countries, and generally wintered in Norway. Happening one time to be ſeparated from each other, the ſon ſteered his courſe for Norway, where he ſuppoſed he ſhould meet with his father; but on his arrival there, found he was gone to Greenland, a country but lately diſcovered, and little known to the Norwegians. Biarn determined, at all events, to follow his father, and ſet ſail for Greenland; although, ſays Arngrim, "he

* This little treatiſe of Torfæus appeared in the year 1705, under the title of "*Hiſtoria Vinlandiæ antiquæ, ſeu pars Americæ Septentrionalis, ubi nominis ratio recenſetur, &c. ex antiquit. Iſlandicis eruta.*" Arngrim's Hiſtory of Greenland came out more than one hundred years before, but he only occaſionally mentioned this diſcovery in the 9th and 10th chapters. The Icelandic manuſcripts that ſpeak of it are numerous; the principal are the *Codex Flateyenſis*, *Hiemskringla*, *Landnama Saga*, or "Book "on the origin of countries;" and poſſibly others that are now loſt, but of which many extracts remain in the collection of a learned Icelander named BIORN DE SKARDZA.

"had

" had no-body on board who could di-
" rect him in the voyage, nor any par-
" ticular inſtructions to guide him; ſo
" great was the courage of the ancients!
" He ſteered by the obſervation of the ſtars,
" and by what he had heard of the ſitua-
" tion of the country he was in queſt of."
During the firſt three days, he bore towards the weſt, but the wind varying to the north, and blowing ſtrong, he was forced to run to the ſouthward. The wind ceaſing in about twenty-four hours, they diſcovered land at a diſtance, which as they approached they perceived to be flat and low, and covered with wood; for which reaſon he would not go on ſhore, as being convinced it could not be Greenland, which had been repreſented to him as diſtinguiſhable at a great diſtance for its mountains covered with ſnow. They then ſailed away towards the North-weſt, and were aware of a road which formed an iſland, but did not ſtop there. After ſome days they arrived in Greenland, where Biarn met with his father.

The following ſummer, viz. in the year 1002, Biarn made another voyage to Norway, where, to one of the principal lords of the country, named count ERIC, he mentioned the diſcovery he had made of

ſome unknown iſlands. The count blamed his want of curioſity, and ſtrongly preſſed him to proceed on with his diſcovery. In conſequence of this advice Biarn, as ſoon as he was returned to Greenland to his father, began to think ſeriouſly of exploring thoſe lands with more attention. LEIF, the ſon of that ſame Eric Rufus who had diſcovered Greenland, and who was ſtill chief of the colony he had ſettled there; this Leif, I ſay, being deſirous of rendering himſelf illuſtrious like his father, formed the deſign of going thither himſelf; and prevailing on his father Eric to accompany him, they fitted out a veſſel with five and thirty hands; but when the old man was ſetting out on horſeback to go to the ſhip, his horſe happened to fall down under him; an accident which he conſidered as an admonition from heaven to deſiſt from the enterprize; and therefore returning home, the leſs-ſuperſtitious Leif ſet ſail without him.

He ſoon deſcryed one of the coaſts which Biarn had before ſeen, that lay neareſt to Greenland. He caſt anchor and went on ſhore, but found only a flat rocky ſhore without any kind of verdure; he therefore immediately quitted it, after having firſt given it the name of HELLELAND, or the "Flat

" Flat Country*." A ſhort navigation brought him to another place, which Biarn had alſo noted. In this land, which lay very low, they ſaw nothing but a few ſcattered thickets, and white ſand. This he called MARK-LAND, or the " Level " country†." Two days proſperous ſailing brought them to a third ſhore, which was ſheltered to the north by an iſland. They diſembarked there in very fine weather, and found plants which produced a grain as ſweet as honey. Leaving this, they ſailed weſtward, in ſearch of ſome harbour, and at length entering the mouth of a river, were carried up by the tide into a lake whence the ſtream proceeded.

As ſoon as they were landed, they pitched their tents on the ſhore, not yet daring to wander far from it. The river afforded them plenty of very large ſalmons; the air was ſoft and temperate; the ſoil appeared to be fruitful, and the paſtu-

* *Pays plat*, ſays the French original. But HELLELAND ſhould rather be rendered " Stony-" land:" for *Hella* ſignifies a Stone or Rock, in the Northern languages; which our French author ſeems to have been but ſlightly acquainted with. T.

† *Pays du plaine*, ſays our author.—But MARK-LAND rather ſignifies " Woody-land:" from *Mark (ſylva, teſqua)* a Wood, or Rough Thicket. T.

rage very good. The days in winter were much longer than in Greenland, and they had leſs ſnow than in Iceland *. Entirely ſatisfied with their new reſidence, they erected houſes and ſpent the winter there.

But before the ſetting in of this ſeaſon, a German who was of their company, named TYRKER, was one day miſſing. Leif, apprehenſive for the ſafety of a man who had been long in his father's family, and was an excellent handycraft, ſent his people all about to hunt for him. He was at length found, ſinging and leaping, and expreſſing the moſt extravagant joy by his diſcourſe and geſtures. The aſtoniſhed Greenlanders enquired the reaſon of ſuch ſtrange behaviour, and it was not without difficulty,

* Arngrim adds, from the ancient chronicles, that their ſhorteſt day was ſix, and their night eighteen hours. But it muſt be confeſſed, that nothing can be more uncertain than this reckoning by hours, among a people who had no exact method of computing time. The arguments of Torfæus on this ſubject make it evident, that the old Icelandic word which we tranſlate HOUR, is of a very vague and undetermined ſignification; and that the ancient chronicles may be ſo underſtood as to give us room to conclude that at the winter ſolſtice the ſun roſe there at 8 in the morning and ſet at 4. This gives us the 49th degree, which is the latitude of Canada and Newfoundland. See the Supplement to Torfæus's Ancient Vinland, &c.
Firſt Edit.

owing

owing to the difference of their languages, that Tyrker made them underſtand he had diſcovered wild grapes near a place which he pointed out. Excited by this news, they immediately went thither, and brought back ſeveral bunches to their commander, who was equally ſurprized. Leif ſtill doubted whether they were grapes; but the German aſſured him he was born in a country where vines grew, and that he knew them too well to be miſtaken. Yielding to this proof, Leif named the country VINLAND, or the Land of Wine.

Leif returned to Greenland in the ſpring; but one of his brothers, named THORVALD, thinking he had left the diſcovery imperfect, obtained from Eric this ſame veſſel and thirty men. Thorvald arriving at Vinland, made uſe of the houſes built by Leif, and living on fiſh, which was in great plenty, paſſed the winter there. In the ſpring he took part of his people, and ſet out weſtward to examine the country. They met every where with very pleaſing landſcapes, all the coaſts covered with foreſts, and the ſhores with a black ſand. They ſaw a multitude of little iſlands divided from each other by ſmall arms of the ſea, but no marks of either wild beaſts, or of men, except a heap of wood piled up in the form of a pyramid. Having ſpent

the ſummer in this ſurvey, they returned in autumn to their winter quarters; but the ſummer following Thorvald being deſirous of exploring the eaſtern and northern coaſts, his veſſel was a good deal ſhattered by a ſtorm, and the remainder of that ſeaſon was taken up in repairing her. He afterwards ſet up the keel, which was unfit for ſervice, at the extremity of a neck of land, thence called KIELLAR-NÆS, or Cape-Keel *. He then proceeded to ſurvey the eaſtern coaſts, where he gave names to ſeveral Bays and Capes which he then diſcovered.

On his landing one day, attracted by the beauty of the ſhore, he was aware of three little leathern canoes, in each of which were three perſons ſeemingly half-aſleep. Thorvald and his companions inſtantly ran in and ſeized them all excepting one, who eſcaped; and by a ferocity as imprudent as it was cruel, put them to death the ſame day. Soon afterwards, as they lay on the ſame coaſt, they were ſuddenly alarmed by the arrival of a great number of theſe little veſſels, which covered the whole bay. Thorvald gave immediate orders to his party to defend themſelves with planks and

* Or as we ſhould expreſs it in Engliſh, KEELNESS. T.

boards

boards againſt their darts, which quite filled the air; and the ſavages having in vain waſted all their arrows, after an hour's combat, betook themſelves to a precipitate flight. The Norwegians called them in deriſion SKRÆLINGUES, *i. e.* ſmall and puny men *: the chronicles tell us, that this kind of men are neither endowed with ſtrength nor courage, and that there would be nothing to fear from a whole army of them. Arngrim adds, that theſe Skrælingues are the ſame people who inhabit the weſtern parts of Greenland, and that the Norwegians who are ſettled on thoſe coaſts had called the ſavages they met with there by the ſame name.

Thorvald was the only one who was mortally wounded, and dying ſoon after, paid the penalty that was juſtly due for his inhuman conduct. As he deſired to be buried with a croſs at his feet, and another at his head, he ſeems to have imbibed ſome idea of Chriſtianity, which at that time began to dawn in Norwegian Greenland. His body was interred at the point of the Cape, where he had intended

* They alſo called them SMÆLINGS, which ſignifies the ſame thing; SMÆL in Icelandic being equivalent to SMALL in Engliſh. Vid. Buſſæi Not. in Arii Polyhiſt. Sched. p. 33. T.

to make a ſettlement; which Cape was named from the croſſes, KROSSA-NÆS or KORSNÆS*. The ſeaſon being too far advanced for undertaking the voyage home, the reſt of the crew ſtaid the winter there, and did not reach Greenland till the following ſpring. We are farther told, that they loaded the veſſel with vine-ſets, and all the raiſins they could preſerve.

ERIC† had left a third ſon, named THORSTEIN, who as ſoon as he was informed of his brother Thorvald's death, embarked that very year with his wife Gudride, and a ſelect crew of twenty men. His principal deſign was to bring his brother's body back to Greenland, that it might be buried in a country more agreeable to his manes, and in a manner more honourable to his family. But during the whole ſummer the winds proved ſo contrary and tempeſtuous, that after ſeveral fruitleſs attempts, he was driven back to a part of Greenland far diſtant from the colony of his countrymen. Here he was

* Or, according to the Engliſh dialect, CROSS-NESS, or CAPE-CROSS. T.

† M. Mallet ſays, "*Leif avoit laiſſé un troiſieme fils nommé Thorſtein*;" but this is evidently a miſtake, for he tells us in the next line, that THORSTEIN was the brother of THORVALD; and he had before called THORVALD the brother of LEIF. T.

confined

confined during the rigor of the winter, deprived of all aſſiſtance, and expoſed to the ſeverity of ſo rude a climate. Theſe misfortunes were encreaſed by a contagious ſickneſs, which carried off Thorſtein and moſt of his company. His widow took care of her huſband's body, and returning with it in the ſpring, interred it in the burial-place of his family.

Hitherto we have ſeen the Norwegians only making ſlight efforts to eſtabliſh themſelves in Vinland. The year after Thorſtein's death proved more favourable to the deſign of ſettling a colony. A rich Icelander, named Thorfin, whoſe genealogy the chronicles have carefully preſerved, arrived in Greenland from Norway, with a great number of followers. He cultivated an acquaintance with Leif, who ſince his father Eric's death was head of the colony; and with his conſent eſpouſed Gudride, by whom he acquired a right to thoſe claims her former huſband had on the ſettlements at Vinland. Thither he ſoon went to take poſſeſſion, having with him Gudride and five other women, beſides ſixty ſailors, much cattle, proviſion, and implements of huſbandry. Nothing was omitted that could forward an enterprize of this kind. Soon after his arrival on the coaſt he caught a great whale, which proved

very ſerviceable to the whole company. The paſturage was found to be ſo plentiful and rich, that a bull they had carried over with them became in a ſhort time remarkable for its fierceneſs and ſtrength.

The remainder of that ſummer, and the winter following were ſpent in taking all neceſſary precautions for their preſervation, and in procuring all the conveniences of which they had any idea. The ſucceeding ſummer the Skrelingues or natives of the country came down in crowds, and brought with them various merchandizes * for traffic. It was obſerved that the roaring of the bull terrified them to ſuch a degree, that they burſt open the doors of Thorfin's houſe, and crowded in with the utmoſt precipitation. Thorfin ſuffered his people to traffic with them, but ſtrictly forbad their ſupplying them with arms, which were what they ſeemed moſt deſirous of obtaining. The Greenland women offered them different kinds of eatables made with milk, of which they were ſo fond, that they came down in crowds to beg them in exchange for their ſkins. Some diſputes that aroſe obliged the Skrelingues to retire,

* The chronicles remark, that theſe merchandizes conſiſted chiefly of furs, ſables, the ſkins of white rats, &c.

and

and Thorfin ſurrounded the manufactory with a ſtrong paliſade to prevent ſurprize.

Nothing memorable occurred the next year. The Skrelingues again offered their commodities, and again begged to have arms in exchange. Theſe being always denied, one of them ſtole an hatchet, and returned highly pleaſed to his companions. Eager to try the new inſtrument, he gave a violent blow to one of his comrades, and killed him on the ſpot. All who were preſent ſtood ſilent with aſtoniſhment 'till one whoſe ſhape and air beſpoke him to be a perſon of ſome authority among them, took up the inſtrument, and after cloſely examining it, threw it with the utmoſt indignation as far as he could into the ſea.

After ſtaying there three years, Thorfin returned home, with a valuable cargo of raiſins and other merchandize; the fame of which ſpreading through the North, the incitements of curioſity and gain drew ſeveral adventurers to Vinland. The author of the chronicle, called the MANUSCRIPT OF FLATEY, relates, that after ſeveral voyages, Thorfin ended his days in Iceland, where he had built a very fine houſe, and lived in ſplendor as one of the firſt lords of the country; that he had a ſon named SNORRO, born in Vinland; that his

widow went on a pilgrimage to Rome after his death, and having at her return devoted herſelf entirely to religion, died in a monaſtery in Iceland, near a church erected by her ſon. The ſame author adds, that this account is confirmed by Thorfin himſelf, and mentions the facts as well known to all the world. Another manuſcript relates the ſame circumſtances only with ſome inconſiderable variations.

But to return to the new colony, where Thorfin had without doubt left ſome of his people: two brothers, named HELGUE and FINBOG, Icelanders by birth, going to Greenland, were perſuaded to fit out two veſſels, and undertake a voyage to this new country. FREIDIS, the daughter of Eric Rufus, accompanied them; but this woman, unworthy to belong to ſo illuſtrious a family, impoſed upon the two brothers, and during their ſtay in Vinland, raiſed ſuch diſturbances as ended in the maſſacre of thirty people. Freidis not daring to ſtay after this bloody ſcene, fled to Greenland to her brother Leif, where ſhe ſpent the reſidue of her days hated and deſpiſed by all mankind. Helgue and Finbog were among the unfortunate victims, and it is probable that thoſe who eſcaped ſettled in the country.

This

This is the ſubſtance of what we find in the ancient Icelandic writers concerning the diſcovery of VINLAND: and as they only mention it occaſionally, this accounts for their ſilence in reſpect to the ſequel. There is reaſon to ſuppoſe, that the people of the North continued to make voyages to Vinland for a long time: but as nothing particular occurred afterwards, hiſtorians deemed it ſufficient to mention ſuch circumſtances as related to its firſt diſcovery and ſettlement. Yet the Icelandic chronicles ſometimes ſpeak of Vinland afterwards. There is one of them in particular (which the critics eſteem very authentic) that makes expreſs mention of a Saxon prieſt, named JOHN, who after having ſerved a church in Iceland for the ſpace of four years, paſſed over to Vinland, with an intention of converting the Norwegian colony; but we may conclude his attempt did not ſucceed, ſince we find he was condemned to death. In the year 1121, ERIC, a biſhop of Greenland, went over there on the ſame errand, but we know not with what ſucceſs. Since that time Vinland ſeems by degrees to have been forgotten in the North; and that part of Greenland which had embraced Chriſtianity being loſt, Iceland alſo fallen from its former ſtate, and the northern nations being

waſted by a peſtilence, and weakened by internal feuds, all remembrance of that diſcovery was at length utterly obliterated, and the Norwegian Vinlanders themſelves having no further connection with Europe, were either incorporated into, or deſtroyed by their barbarian neighbours *. Be this as it may, the teſtimony of our ancient chronicles is ſtrongly corroborated by the poſitive teſtimony of ADAM of BREMEN, a well-eſteemed hiſtorian, who lived in the very age when the diſcovery was made. Adam was a virtuous eccleſiaſtic, who received all he relates from the mouth of SWAIN II.† king of Denmark, who had entertained him during the long abode he made in that kingdom. Theſe are his own words ‡, " The king of Denmark hath " informed me, that another iſland has " been diſcovered in the ocean that waſhes " Norway or Finmark, which iſland is " called Vinland, from the vines which

* In his firſt edit. our author was of opinion, that the ſavages called ESKIMAUX, who inhabit Newfoundland, might poſſibly be deſcended from that Norwegian colony, as being diſtinguiſhed from the other inhabitants of America by their white ſkins, their fair hair, and buſhy beards: but upon reviſal he found reaſon to diſcard this opinion. T.

† Called by the Danes SUENON ESTRIDSEN. *Firſt Edit.*

‡ Vid. Adam Brem. de ſitu Dan. c. 246.

" grow

" grow there ſpontaneouſly; and we learn, " not by fabulous hearſay, but by the ex- " preſs report of certain Danes, that fruits " are produced there without cultivation." Hence we ſee, that this was not only admitted as a certain fact in Greenland, Iceland and Norway, but the fame of it was alſo ſpread abroad in Denmark *; and we may add in England, Normandy, and undoubtedly much further. Ordericus Vitalis, the hiſtorian of the Normans and Engliſh, whom I before mentioned, reckons Vinland along with Greenland Iceland and the Orkneys as countries under the dominion of the king of Norway, and whoſe commerce encreaſed his revenues †. What Adam of Bremen immediately adds after the foregoing paſſage, merits likewiſe ſome attention, as it indicates the ſtrong propenſity of the Norwegians for maritime enterprizes, and (what we ſhould little ex-

* Rudbek pretends, that in this place ADAM means Finland in Sweden. Among the many bold conjectures of this man, there is not one leſs defenſible than this. Adam of Bremen was well acquainted with Finland, ſince he expreſsly names it in that ſame work. It is needleſs to confute an opinion ſo contrary to probability, and devoid of all foundation.

† Order. Vital. hiſt. Eccleſ. ad an. 1098.

pect from ſo unenlightened a people) for expeditions that had even no other end but to make new diſcoveries. " In ad-
" vancing farther towards the North," ſays he, " we meet with nothing but a
" boundleſs ſea, covered with enormous
" pieces of ice, and hid in perpetual dark-
" neſs." (He certainly means thoſe almoſt continual fogs, ſo well known to ſuch as frequent the ſeas of North America.)
" Harold, prince of Norway, lately was
" very near having a fatal proof of this,
" when being deſirous of knowing the ex-
" tent of the northern ocean, he tried to
" diſcover it with ſeveral veſſels; but the
" limits of the world being hid from their
" ſight by thick darkneſs, they were with
" difficulty preſerved from deſtruction in
" that vaſt maſs of waters." We ſee, notwithſtanding this figurative manner of ſpeaking, that Harold had formed ſome great deſign, concerning which hiſtory leaves us in the dark; and without doubt he was not the only one of his age and nation, whoſe enterprizes of this kind are buried in oblivion. Fame, as well as all other ſublunary things, is governed by Chance, and without her aſſiſtance, the attempt made by Alfred the Great to diſcover a north-eaſt paſſage to the Indies, would have ſtill remained

remained unknown to us *, In all ages the

* In the Cotton Library is happily preſerved a Relation of this Voyage, written in the Saxon language by ALFRED himſelf, as he took it down from the mouth of OCTHER, a Norwegian, who it ſhould ſeem, had been ſent by him into thoſe ſeas, for the purpoſe mentioned in the text. The narrative, it muſt be owned, appears to us in this enlightened age but ſhort and ſuperficial: but if we conſider the time in which it was written, what muſt we think of the amazing capacity of that great monarch, who could conceive or encourage ſuch an attempt, and who could condeſcend to write down with his own hand the reſult of the enquiry, which probably the Norwegian adventurer was not able to do himſelf, and which the king might not chuſe to truſt to the pen of another, who might not have been ſo exact or curious?

In the ſame tract the king has alſo given the report of WULFSTAN, an Anglo Saxon, whom he had ſent to explore the Baltic. The ſubſtance of Octher's account may be ſeen in Hackluyt's Voyages, and in part in Spelman's Life of Alfred, p. 153. The original was firſt publiſhed with a Latin verſion, at the end of Walker's Lat. tranſlation of Spelman, and has been reprinted (at the end of *Arii Polyhiſt. Schædæ de Iſlandia ab Andræa Buſſæo, Hafn.* 1733, 4*to.*) under this title, *Periplus* OHTHERI *Halgolando-Norvegi, ut et* WULFSTANI *Angli, ſecundum narrationes eorundem de ſuis, Unius in ultimam plagam ſeptentrionalem, Utriuſque autem in mari Balthico Navigationibus, juſſu* ÆLFREDI MAGNI *Anglorum regis, ſeculo a nativitate Chriſti nono factis; ab* IPSO REGE *Anglo-Saxonicâ linguâ deſcriptus, demum . . . Latiné verſus, et, una cum* " Joh. " Spelmanni Vita Æl-

the Europeans ſeem to have had a wonderful propenſity, peculiar to themſelves, for great and daring enterprizes. Hence we may foreſee, that the glory of pervading the whole globe is reſerved for them. And doubtleſs the time will come, when they will explore and meaſure the vaſt countries of Terra Auſtralis, will cruiſe beneath the Poles, and will ſecurely, and freely in every ſenſe of the expreſſion, SAIL ROUND THE WORLD.

To return to our ſubject. The diſcovery of a diſtant country called Vinland, and the reality of a Norwegian colony's ſettling there, appear to be facts ſo well atteſted on all ſides, and related with circumſtances ſo probable, as to leave no room for any doubt. But to ſettle the geography of the country where this happened, is not an eaſy matter. To ſucceed in an enquiry of this kind we ſhould know what part of America lies neareſt to Greenland; by what nations it is inhabited; what are their languages and traditions; as alſo the cuſtoms and produce of their countries; branches

" fredi Magni," *è veteri cod. MS. Biblioth Cotton. editus: Jam vero, ob antiquitatem, et ſeptentrionalis tum temporis ſtatûs cognitionem, repetitus, ac brevibus* NOTIS *adauctus ab* ANDRÆA BUSSÆO. T.

branches

branches of knowledge theſe, which we ſhall but very imperfectly learn from the books hitherto publiſhed. Nevertheleſs, though we may not be able to aſcertain exactly the ſituation of Vinland, we have ſufficient room to conjecture that this colony could not be far from the coaſts of Labrador, or thoſe of Newfoundland which are not far from it: nor is there any circumſtance in the relations of the ancient chronicles, but what may be accounted for on ſuch a ſuppoſition.

The firſt difficulty that muſt be obviated, is the ſhort ſpace of time that appears to have been taken up in paſſing to this country from Greenland. To this end we muſt obſerve, that the Norwegians might ſet ſail from the weſtern, as well as from the eaſtern coaſt of that country, ſince (as hath been ſaid before) they had ſettled on both ſides of it. Now it is certain, that Davis's Streight, which ſeparates Greenland from the American continent, is very narrow in ſeveral places; and it appears from the journal taken by the learned Mr. Ellis, in his voyage to Hudſon's Bay, that his paſſage from Cape Farewell, which is the moſt ſouthern point of Greenland, into the entrance of the Bay, was but ſeven or eight days eaſy ſail with a wind indifferently favourable. The diſtance between

the ſame Cape and the neareſt coaſt of Labrador is ſtill much leſs. As it cannot be above two hundred French leagues, the voyage could not take up above ſeven or eight days, even allowing for the delays that muſt have happened to the ancients through their want of that ſkill in navigation which the moderns have ſince acquired. This could therefore appear no ſuch frightful diſtance to adventurers who had newly diſcovered Greenland, which is ſeparated from Iceland at leaſt as far. This reaſoning is ſtill farther enforced, when we reflect that the diſtance of Iceland itſelf, from the neareſt part of Norway, is double to that above-mentioned.

In effect, the hiſtory of the North abounds with relations of maritime expeditions of far greater extent than was neceſſary for the diſcovery of America. The ſituation of Greenland, relative to this new country, not being ſufficiently known, is the only circumſtance that can prejudice one againſt it; but when we have maſtered the greater objection, why ſhould we make any difficulty of the leſs? We ſhould ceaſe to be ſurprized at thoſe ſame men croſſing a ſpace of two hundred leagues, which was the diſtance between them and America, whoſe courage and curioſity had frequently prompted them to traverſe the ocean,

ocean, and who had been accuſtomed to perform voyages of three or four hundred leagues before they quitted their former ſettlements. We may indeed ſuppoſe, that when they made incurſions into England, France, Spain, or Italy, they were directed by the coaſts, from which they were never far diſtant; but how can the rapidity of their motions be accounted for, if they never loſt ſight of land? How could ſo imperfect a kind of navigation ſerve to convey into England ſuch numerous fleets as ſailed from Denmark and Norway? How were Iceland, the iſles of Faro, Shetland and Greenland explored? There is nothing then in the diſtance of America that can render it unlikely to have been diſcovered by the Norwegians. Let us ſee if there are not other greater difficulties.

The relations handed down to us in the chronicles, and the name affixed to this new-diſcovered country, agree in deſcribing it as a ſoil where the vine ſpontaneouſly grows. This circumſtance alone has ſerved with many people to render the whole account ſuſpected; but on a cloſer view, we ſhall find it ſo far from overthrowing, that it even confirms the other parts of the relation. I ſhall not evade the difficulty (as I might) by anſwering, that very poſſibly the Norwegians might be ſo little

 acquainted

acquainted with grapes, as to miſtake currants for them, which in the Northern languages are called *Viin-bær* *, or vine-berries; and of which in ſeveral places they make a kind of fermented liquor: but I can aſſert on the faith of the moſt credible travellers, that not only in Canada the vine grows without cultivation, and bears a ſmall well-taſted fruit; but that it is alſo found in far more northern latitudes, and even where the winters are very ſevere. The evidence of Mr. Ellis † may here render all others needleſs. This curious and ſenſible obſerver met with the ſame kind of vine about the Engliſh ſettlements in Hudſon's Bay; the fruit of which he compares to the currants of the Levant. Now Labrador is not far from thence; it lies partly in the ſame, and partly in a more ſouthern latitude, and their ſeveral productions ſeem to be much alike. Beſides, as the Europeans never penetrated very far into the country, it would not prove that there were no vines there, even if THEY had not met with any. But we have room to expect greater diſcoveries on this ſubject from Mr. CALM, a Swediſh botaniſt, educated under Lin-

* *Viin-bær*, or rather *Win-ber*, is a general name in the North for Gooſeberries, Currants, and Grapes. T.

† Voyage to Hudſon's Bay, by Mr. Ellis. Vol. II.

næus,

næus, who ſome years ſince made a curious progreſs through Canada, with a view to its natural hiſtory and productions. According to him, the colony of VINLAND was in the iſland of Newfoundland, which is only ſeparated from the continent of Labrador by a narrow ſtreight of a few leagues called BELLE-ISLE *. This he has undertaken to prove in a part of his work not yet publiſhed; nor can any writer inveſtigate ſuch an inquiry ſo well as one who has been himſelf upon the ſpot.

As to the other circumſtances of the relation, the account given by the ancient chronicles agrees in all reſpects with the reports of modern voyagers. Theſe tell us, that the native ſavages of thoſe countries, from the frequent uſe they make of them in fiſhing, can in a ſhort time collect together a vaſt number of canoes; that they are very ſkilful with their bows and arrows; that on the coaſts they fiſh for whales, and in the inland parts live by hunting; ſo that their merchandize conſiſts of whale-bone and various kinds of ſkins and furs; that they are very fond of iron or hardware, eſpecially arms, hatchets, and other inſtruments of like ſort †; that they are very

* Calm's Reſa til Norra-America. Tome ii. p. 471.
† Vid. Ellis ubi ſupra.

apt to rob ſtrangers, but are otherwiſe cowardly and unwarlike.

If to this picture you add, that they are for the moſt part of a middle ſtature, and little ſkilled in the art of war, it is no wonder that the Norwegians, the largeſt, ſtrongeſt and moſt active people of Europe ſhould look upon them with contempt, as a poor, weak, degenerate race. It is remarkable that the name they gave them of SKRELINGUES is the ſame with which they denoted the Greenlanders, when they firſt diſcovered them. In reality theſe GREENLANDERS and the ESKIMAUX ſeem to have been one people; and this likeneſs between them, which has ſo much ſtruck the moderns, could not fail of appearing in a ſtronger light to the Norwegians, who were ſtill better able to compare them together. "I believe, ſays Mr. Ellis, that "the Eſkimaux are the ſame people with "the Greenlanders; and this ſeems the "more probable, when we conſider the "narrowneſs of Davis's Streight, and the "vagabond ſtrolling life we find all this "nation accuſtomed to lead wherever we "meet with them." This is alſo the opinion of Mr. Egede, who knew the Greenlanders better than any body. He obſerves, that according to their own accounts, Davis's Streight is only a deep bay, which runs

on

on, narrowing towards the north, till the oppoſite American continent can be eaſily diſcerned from Greenland, and that the extremity of this bay ends in a river, over which, wandering ſavages, inured to cold, might eaſily paſs from one land to the other, even if they had had no canoes.

The reſult of all this ſeems to be, that there can be no doubt, but that the Norwegian Greenlanders diſcovered the American continent; that the place where they ſettled was either the country of Labrador, or Newfoundland, and that their colony ſubſiſted there a good while. But then this is all we can ſay about it with any certainty. To endeavour to aſcertain the exact ſite, extent and fortune of the eſtabliſhment, would be a fruitleſs labour. Time and chance may poſſibly one day inform us of theſe circumſtances. I ſhall not therefore amuſe the reader with uncertain conjectures; neither ſhall I trouble him with ſuch reflections as he is able to make much better than myſelf.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the cuſtoms and manners of the ancient Northern nations.

WHOEVER attempts to delineate the manners of the ancient inhabitants of the North, will find their love of war and paſſion for arms among the moſt characteriſtic and expreſſive lines of the portrait. Their prejudices, their cuſtoms, their daily occupations, their amuſements, in ſhort, every action of their lives were all impreſſed with this paſſion. They paſſed the greateſt part of their time either in camps or on board their fleets, employed in real engagements, in preparations for them, or in ſham fights; for whenever they were conſtrained to live in peace, the reſemblance of war furniſhed out their higheſt entertainment. They then had reviews, mock battles, which frequently ended in real ones, tournaments, the bodily exerciſes of wreſtling, boxing, racing, &c.

&c. The reſt of their time was commonly ſpent in hunting *, public buſineſs, drinking and ſleeping. "The Germans," ſays Tacitus, "when not engaged in war, paſs "their time in indolence, feaſting and "ſleep. The braveſt and moſt warlike "among them do nothing themſelves; "but transfer the whole care of the houſe, "family and poſſeſſions to the females, "the old men and ſuch as are infirm "among them: And the ſame people, by "a ſtrange contradiction of nature, both "love inaction and hate peace." All the Celtic nations lie under the ſame reproach from the Greek and Roman authors; and it is eaſy to conceive, that a people who

* So Cæſar writes of the Germans, *Vita omnis in venationibus atque in ſtudiis rei militaris conſiſtit.* —— Tacitus is believed to have ſaid the ſame thing in the paſſage quoted below, but as ſome of the words are thought to be corrupt, our author has dropt them in his quotation. The whole paſſage ſtands in the copies thus, *Quotiens bellum non ineunt,* NON *multum venatibus; plus per otium tranſigunt, dediti ſomno ciboque.* (Tacit. Germ. c. 15.) The learned are generally of opinion, that the ſecond NON here is ſpurious, and that we ſhould read *multum venatibus*, or *tum vitam venatibus*, &c. But Pelloutier thinks Tacitus meant to inſinuate that the Germans beſtow a ſmall portion of their time in hunting, but much more in idleneſs, feaſting and ſleeping. Hiſt. des Celtes. tom. i. p. 449. T.

affixed ideas of contempt to all labour of body and mind, had for the moſt part nothing elſe to do but to carouſe and ſleep, whenever the ſtate did not call them to arms. This was the badge and nobleſt privilege of their liberty; every free man placed his glory and happineſs in being often invited to ſolemn entertainments; and the hopes of partaking of eternal feaſts filled, as we have ſeen, the North with heroes. Other pleaſures and other rewards have been conceived under the influence of other climes: All nations have in their infancy been governed by the force of climate; and their firſt legiſlators, far from endeavouring to ſtem this torrent but borne away with it themſelves, have ever by their laws and inſtitutions enlarged and encreaſed its natural prevalence. "Among "the Celts (as their learned hiſtorian tells "us) there was no national or provincial "aſſembly held; no civil or religious feſti-"val obſerved; no birth-day, marriage or "funeral properly ſolemnized; no treaty "of alliance or friendſhip entered into, in "which feaſting did not bear a principal "part*." In all the hiſtorical monuments of ancient Scandinavia we con-

* Vid. Pelloutier Hiſt. des Celtes. Tom. i. lib. 2. chap. 12.

ſtantly

ſtantly hear of frequent and exceſſive feaſtings *. Tacitus obſerves, that the plentiful tables of the chiefs, were, among the Germans, the wages of their dependants †. Nor could a great lord or chieftain take a readier way to attract a numerous train of followers, than by often making magnificent entertainments. It was at table that the Germans conſulted together on their moſt important concerns, ſuch as the electing of their princes, the entering into war, or the concluding of peace, &c. On the morrow they re-conſidered the reſolutions of the preceding night, ſuppoſing, adds the ſame hiſtorian, "that the proper time to "take each others opinions was when the "ſoul was too open for diſguiſe; and to de-"termine, when it was too cautious to err." The common liquors at theſe carouſals were either beer, mead or wine when they

* We find remarkable inſtances in the Icelandic Chronicles, quoted by Arngrim Jonas. Crymog. lib. i. cap. 6. p. 54. Two brothers in Iceland at the funeral of their father, made a feaſt for 1200 perſons, and regaled them fourteen days. Another inhabitant of Iceland entertained for the ſame number of days not leſs than 900 perſons, and at laſt ſent them away with preſents. Feaſts of this ſort were frequent in Norway and throughout all the North. *Firſt Edit.*

† *Nam epulæ, et quamquam incompti, largi tamen apparatus, pro ſtipendio cedunt.* Mor. Germ. cap. 14.

could get it: Theſe they drank out of earthen or wooden pitchers, or elſe out of the horns of wild bulls with which their foreſts abounded, or laſtly out of the SCULLS of their enemies. The principal perſon at the table took the cup firſt, and riſing up, ſaluted by name either him who ſat next him, or him who was neareſt in rank; then he drank it off, and cauſing it to be filled up again to the brim, preſented it to the man whom he had ſaluted *. Hence came the cuſtom of drinking to the health of the gueſts: But I know not whether that of drinking to the honour of the Gods was generally practiſed among all the 'Gothic and' Celtic people, or only among ſome of the northern nations. Snorro Sturleſon ſays, "That in the ſolemn feſtivals, ſuch "as uſually followed the ſacrifices, they "emptied what was called the Cup of "ODIN, to obtain victory and a glorious

* This ancient ceremony is ſtill kept up, at ſolemn feaſts, in ſome of the Colleges in our Univerſities.——In like manner our cuſtom of drinking to the memory of departed perſons, is evidently a relique of the ancient ſuperſtition of drinking to the manes of their heroes, kings and friends. —— *Heroum, regum, amicorum, et in bello fortiter rem gerentium, memoriales ſcyphos 'exhauriebant,' quibus eorum manibus parentare ſe credebant.* Wormius apud Barthol. Cauſ. contempt. mort. p. 127. T.

"reign;

" reign; then the cups of NIORD and of " FREY, for a plentiful ſeaſon; after " which ſeveral uſed to take off another " to BRAGE †, the God of Eloquence " and Poetry." The Scandinavians were ſo much addicted to this cuſtom, that the firſt miſſionaries, unable to aboliſh it, were forced inſtead of theſe falſe deities to ſubſtitute the true God, Jeſus Chriſt and the ſaints; to whoſe honour they devoutly drank for many ages. In the pagan times they alſo drank to the heroes, and to ſuch of their friends as had fallen bravely in battle. Laſtly, it was at theſe feaſts, for the moſt part, that thoſe aſſociations were formed and confirmed, which the old Chronicles ſo often mention. There was ſcarcely a valiant man who was not a member of one or more of theſe ſocieties; the chief tie of which was a ſolemn obligation entered into, to defend and protect their companions on all occaſions, and to revenge their deaths at the hazard of their own lives ‡. This oath was taken and renewed

† Vid. Barthol. de Cauſ. contempt. mort. lib. i. cap. 8. p. 128.

‡ In the early ſtate of ſociety, when the laws were too weak to afford protection, individuals had no other means of ſecuring their lives and property, but by entering into theſe aſſociations, in which a number of men

newed at their feſtivals, which had alſo their reſpective laws. Fraternities of this ſort ſtill ſubſiſted after the Chriſtian religion was received in the North, but by degrees the object was changed. When the harbouring projects of enmity and revenge were forbidden at them, theſe meetings had no other object or ſupport but drunkenneſs and intemperance. More than two hundred years after the Scandinavians had embraced Chriſtianity there were ſtill confraternities of which the firſt nobility were

engaged to vindicate and avenge each other. Theſe confederacies, which were at firſt neceſſary for ſelf-preſervation, and might originally be confined to ſelf-defence, often proceeded afterwards to act offenſively, and ſo were productive of great miſchiefs.

Confraternities of the ſame kind prevailed in this kingdom, not only during the Anglo-Saxon times, but for ſome ages after the conqueſt. They were called BANDSHIPS, and were often under the patronage of ſome great man; they had public badges by which each band or confederacy was diſtinguiſhed, and at length grew to ſuch a paſs as to ſupport each other in all quarrels, robberies, murders and other outrages: this occaſioned a particular act of parliament for their ſuppreſſion, 1 Rich. II. chap. 7.—— Dr. Hickes has preſerved a very curious bond of this kind, which he calls *Sodalitium*; it was drawn up in the Anglo-Saxon times, and contains many particulars which ſtrongly mark the manners and character of thoſe rude ages. See his *Diſſertatio Epiſtolaris*, p. 21. T.

members,

members. But the diſorders committed at theſe meetings encreaſing, the Councils were at laſt obliged to ſuppreſs them *.

While the attention of theſe people was thus engroſſed by their paſſion for arms and the pleaſures of the table, we may conclude that love held no violent dominion over them. It is beſides well known, that the inhabitants of the North are not of very quick ſenſibility. The ideas and

* The reader will find many curious particulars relating to the above-mentioned confraternities (or GILDS as they called them in the North) in BARTHOLIN; who has given ſome of the laws or ſtatutes obſerved by them, particularly thoſe found in a MS. of the thirteenth century.——One of theſe ſtatutes will give us an idea of the ſobriety of thoſe times: *Si quis pro ebrietate ceciderit in ipſa domo convivii, vel antequam propriam curiam intraverit, Oram* (a ſmall piece of money) *perſolvat.* Not leſs remarkable are the ſtatutes of another confraternity inſtituted in honour of S. Olave king of Norway; among which we find theſe: *Quicunque potum ſuum effundit latius quam pede velare poterit, VI Denarios perſolvat. Quicunque dormierit in banco convivii in conſpectu fratrum, Oram perſolvat. Quicunque ebrietatis causâ in domo convivii vomitum fecerit, Dimidiam Marcam perſolvat,* &c. (Barthol. cauſ. contempt. mort. &c. p. 133.)

Our modern CLUBS are evidently the offſpring of the ancient GILDS or GUILDS of our northern anceſtors.

T.

modes of thinking of the Scandinavians were in this reſpect very different from thoſe of the Aſiatics and more ſouthern nations; who by a contraſt as remarkable as it is common, have ever felt for the female ſex the warm paſſion of love, devoid of any real eſteem. Being at the ſame time tyrants and ſlaves; laying aſide their own reaſon, and requiring none in the object, they have ever made a quick tranſition from adoration to contempt, and from ſentiments of the moſt extravagant and violent love, to thoſe of the moſt cruel jealouſy or of an indifference ſtill more inſulting. We find the reverſe of all this among the northern nations, who did not ſo much conſider the other ſex as made for their pleaſure, as to be their equals and companions, whoſe eſteem, as valuable as their other favours, could only be obtained by conſtant attentions, by generous ſervices, and by a proper exertion of virtue and courage. I conceive that this will at firſt ſight be deemed a paradox, and that it will not be an eaſy matter to reconcile a manner of thinking which ſuppoſes ſo much delicacy, with the rough unpoliſhed character of this people. Yet I believe the obſervation is ſo well grounded that one may venture to aſſert, that it is this ſame people who have contributed to diffuſe through all

Europe

Europe that ſpirit of equity, of moderation, and generoſity ſhewn by the ſtronger to the weaker ſex, which is at this day the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of European manners; nay that we even owe to them that ſpirit of gallantry which was ſo little known to the Greeks and Romans, how polite ſoever in other reſpects.

That there ſhould in the North be a communication of liberty and equality between the two ſexes, is what one might expect to find there in thoſe ancient times, when mens property was ſmall and almoſt upon an equality; when their manners were ſimple; when their paſſions diſcloſed themſelves but ſlowly, and then under the dominion of reaſon; being moderated by a rigorous climate and their hard way of living; and laſtly, when the ſole aim of government was to preſerve and extend liberty. But the Scandinavians went ſtill farther, and theſe ſame men, who on other occaſions were too high-ſpirited to yield to any earthly power; yet in whatever related to the fair ſex ſeem to have been no longer tenacious of their rights or independance. The principles of the ancient or Celtic religion will afford us proofs of this reſpect paid to the ladies, and at the ſame time may poſſibly help us to account for it. I have often aſſerted that

the immediate intervention of the Deity, even in the ſlighteſt things, was one of their moſt eſtabliſhed doctrines, and that every, even the moſt minute appearance of nature, was a manifeſtation of the will of heaven to thoſe who underſtood its language. Thus mens involuntary motions, their dreams, their ſudden and unforeſeen inclinations being conſidered as the ſalutary admonitions of heaven, became the objects of ſerious attention. And a univerſal reſpect could not but be paid to thoſe who were conſidered as the organs or inſtruments of a beneficent Deity. Now women muſt appear much more proper than men for ſo noble a purpoſe, who being commonly more ſubject than we to the unknown laws of temperament and conſtitution, ſeem leſs to be governed by reflection, than by ſenſation and natural inſtinct. Hence it was that the Germans admitted them into their councils, and conſulted with them on the buſineſs of the ſtate. Hence it was that among them, as alſo among the Gauls, there were ten propheteſſes for one prophet; whereas in the Eaſt we find the contrary proportion, if indeed there was ever known an inſtance in thoſe countries of a female worker of miracles. Hence alſo it was, that nothing was formerly more common in the North,

than

than to meet with women who delivered oracular informations, cured the moſt inveterate maladies, aſſumed whatever ſhape they pleaſed, raiſed ſtorms, chained up the winds, travelled through the air, and in one word, performed every function of the Fairy-art. Thus endowed with ſupernatural powers, theſe propheteſſes being converted as it were into fairies or demons, influenced the events they had predicted, and all nature became ſubject to their command. Tacitus puts this beyond a diſpute when he ſays, "The Germans ſuppoſe "ſome divine and prophetic quality reſi-"dent in their women, and are care-"ful neither to diſregard their admoni-"tions, nor to neglect their anſwers*." Nor can it be doubted but that the ſame notions prevailed among the Scandinavians. Strabo relates that the Cimbri were accompanied by venerable and hoary-headed propheteſſes, apparrelled in long linen robes moſt ſplendidly white. We alſo find this

* Tacit. de Mor. Ger. c. 8. — There is a remarkable paſſage on the ſame ſubject in Polyen. Stratagem. lib. i. and in Plutarch "*De virtutibus* "*mulierum.*"—See KEYSLER's "*Diſſertatio de* "*mulieribus fatidicis veterum Celtarum gentiumque Septentrionalium,*" in his learned treatiſe, "*Antiquitates* "*Selectæ Septentrionales,*" &c. 1720. 12mo. p. 371. T.

people always attended by their wives even in their moſt diſtant expeditions, hearing them with reſpect, and after a defeat, more afraid of their reproaches than of the blows of the enemy. To this we may add, that the men being conſtantly employed either in war or hunting, left to the women the care of acquiring thoſe uſeful branches of knowledge which made them regarded by their huſbands as propheteſſes and oracles. Thus to them belonged the ſtudy of ſimples and the art of healing wounds, an art as myſterious in thoſe times, as the occaſions of it were frequent. In the ancient chronicles of the North, we find the matrons and the young women always employed in dreſſing the wounds of their huſbands or lovers. It was the ſame with dreams; which the women alone were verſed in the art of interpreting *.

But this is not all. At a time when piracy and a fondneſs for ſeeking adventures expoſed weakneſs to continual and unexpected attacks, the women, eſpecially thoſe of celebrated beauty, ſtood in want ſometimes of deliverers, and almoſt always of defenders. Every young warrior, eager

* Probably becauſe the women paid more attention to them than the men, and gave more credit to them. *Firſt Edit.*

after

after glory, (and this was often the character of whole nations) muſt have been glad then to take upon him an office, which promiſed ſuch juſt returns of fame, which flattered the moſt agreeable of all paſſions, and at the ſame time gratified another almoſt as ſtrong, that for a wandering and rambling life. We are apt to value what we acquire, in proportion to the labour and trouble it coſts us. Accordingly the hero looked upon himſelf as ſufficiently rewarded for all his pains, if he could at length obtain the fair hand of her he had delivered; and it is obvious how honourable ſuch marriages muſt have been among the people who thought in this manner. This emulation would quickly encreaſe the number of thoſe gallant knights: And the women, on their parts, would not fail to acquire a kind of ſtatelineſs, conſidering themſelves as no leſs neceſſary to the glory of their lovers, than to their happineſs and pleaſure. That fair one who had ſtood in need of ſeveral champions, yielded only to the moſt courageous; and ſhe who had never been in a ſituation that required protectors, was ſtill deſirous of the lover who had proved himſelf capable of encountering all kind of dangers for her ſake. This was more than enough to inflame ſuch ſpirits as theſe with an emulation of ſur-

paſſing each other, and of diſplaying their courage and intrepidity. Beſides the character of the northern women themſelves left the men no other leſs glorious means of gaining their hearts. Naturally chaſte and proud, there was no other way but this to come at them. Educated under the influence of the ſame prejudices concerning honor as the men, they were early taught to deſpiſe thoſe who ſpent their youth in a peaceful obſcurity. All the hiſtorical records of ancient Scandinavia prove what I advance. We ſee there the turn for chivalry as it were in the bud. The hiſtory of other nations ſhews it afterwards as it were opening and expanding in Spain, France, Italy and England, being carried there by the ſwarms that iſſued from the North. It is in reality this ſame ſpirit, reduced afterwards within juſter bounds, that has been productive of that polite gallantry ſo peculiarly obſervable in our manners, which adds a double reliſh to the moſt pleaſing of all ſocial bands, which unites the laſting charms of ſentiment regard and friendſhip with the fleeting fire of love, which tempers and animates one by the other, adds to their number, power, and duration, and which cheriſhes and unfolds ſenſibility, that moſt choice gift of nature, without which neither decorum,

propriety,

propriety, chaſte friendſhip nor true generoſity can exiſt among men. It would be needleſs to prove, that we are not indebted for this manner of thinking to the ancient Romans. We may appeal for this to all who know any thing of their character. But though I aſſert that the reſpect we ſhew to the fair ſex is probably derived from that ſuperſtitious reverence which our anceſtors had for them, and is only a relique of that ancient authority, which the women enjoyed among the northern nations; I ought alſo to prove by facts an opinion ſo contrary to eſtabliſhed prejudices, and at firſt ſight ſo unlikely to be true. To do this will be eaſy.

Every page of northern hiſtory preſents us with warriors as gallant as intrepid. Inſpired by that paſſion which Montagne calls "the ſpring of great actions," king REGNER LODBROG, whom I have ſo often mentioned, and who was one of the moſt celebrated heroes of his time, ſignalized his youth by a gallant exploit. A Swediſh prince had a daughter named THORA, whoſe beauty was celebrated throughout the North. Fearing leſt ſhe might fall into the hands of a raviſher, he ſecured her, probably during his abſence, in a caſtle of his, under the guardianſhip of one of his officers. This man falling

violently in love with his ward, abſolutely refuſed to reſign his charge, and had taken ſuch precautions to keep her in his hands, that the Swediſh prince in vain endeavoured to ſet her at liberty. Deſpairing at laſt to ſucceed in the attempt himſelf, he publiſhed through all the neighbouring countries, that he would beſtow his daughter in marriage on any perſon, of whatever condition, who ſhould conquer her raviſher *. Of all thoſe who aſpired to ſo noble a prize, young Regner was the happy man who delivered and married the fair captive. This exploit, as he tells us in an ode which he wrote a very little time before his death, placed him in the rank of heroes. After Thora's deceaſe, Regner eſpouſed a young ſhepherdeſs whom he had ſeen by accident on the coaſt of Norway. As the particular circumſtances of this event are to my preſent purpoſe, I will briefly relate them from a very ancient Icelandic hiſtory of the life of Regner †.

* Vid. Torf. Hiſt. Norveg. tom. i. lib. 10. This officer being probably called ORM, i. e. Serpent, which was a name very common in thoſe times, the poets took occaſion to ſay that THORA was guarded by a furious Dragon. Allegories of this ſort are quite in the taſte and manner of that age. *Firſt Edit.*

† Vid. Regnara Lodbrogs Saga. c. 5. ap. Bioneri Hiſtor. Reg. Her. & Pugil. Res præclar. geſt. Stockholm. 1737.

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The name of this moſt beautiful nymph was ASLAUGA, who no ſooner ſaw a fleet draw near the ſhore where ſhe fed her flock, but yielding to the natural paſſion of her ſex, repaired to a neighbouring fountain where ſhe carefully waſhed her face and hands and combed her long golden hair which hung down to her feet. The people whom Regner had ordered on ſhore to ſeek for proviſions, were ſo amazed at her beauty, that they returned to their commander, bringing nothing back with them but aſtoniſhment and admiration. The king ſurprized at their account, was deſirous to judge himſelf whether the young maid was really ſo handſome as to make his men forget the orders he had given them. With this deſign he ſent one of his chief attendants to invite Aſlauga on board; but ſhe was prudent enough to refuſe him, till Regner had given his honour, that no attempts ſhould be made on her virtue. Then ſuffering herſelf to be conducted to the king, he no ſooner ſaw her than ſtruck with admiration, he ſung extemporary verſes to this effect; "O moſt mighty Odin! what a ſweet "and unexpected conſolation would it "be, if this young and lovely ſhepherdeſs "would permit me to join my hands to "hers as a pledge of eternal alliance!"

Aſlauga perceiving that the king's paſſion every moment increaſed, was apprehenſive he would not keep his word, and in anſwer to ſuch a flattering compliment, only returned theſe verſes, (for ſuch language was at that time much more polite than proſe, and argued, as we ſhall ſee preſently, good breeding and wit) " O prince, you will deſerve to undergo ſome misfortune, if you fail in your word to me. I have paid my reſpects to the king, and he ought now to ſend me back to my parents." This anſwer only inflamed the Daniſh monarch's love, and he propoſed to carry her to his court, where her happy lot ſhould be the envy of all her companions. To add weight to his intreaties, he offered her a rich veſtment ornamented with ſilver, which had belonged to his former queen Thora, and ſtill addreſſing her in verſe, " Take," ſays he, " if you are wiſe, this robe embroidered with ſilver, which belonged to Thora. Rich garments are made for you. The lovely hands of Thora have often run over this piece of work, and it will be dear to the laſt moment of life, to him whom the North hath called the prince of heroes."

Aſlauga was ſtill proof againſt this flattering attack: " No!" replied ſhe ſinging,

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"I muſt not accept of ſo fine a robe, the "ornament of queen Thora. I am un- "worthy to bear ſuch magnificent gar- "ments; a ſtuff, dark and coarſe, is all "that is befitting a ſhepherdeſs whoſe reſt- "ing-place is a cottage, and who wanders "along the ſandy ſhores after her flock." Recurring at length to a more natural language, ſhe aſſured the king, that notwithſtanding the warmth of his paſſion, ſhe was determined not to yield to it, till ſhe had ſeen proofs of his conſtancy; that he muſt therefore finiſh the expedition which called him out of his kingdom, and then at his return, if he ſtill perſevered in the ſame ſentiments, ſhe was ready to attend into Denmark thoſe whom he ſhould ſend to conduct her thither. The amorous Regner was forced to ſubſcribe to theſe conditions, and immediately departed, proteſting that ſhe ſhould very ſoon ſee him return victorious and more captivated with her than ever. In a few months the king repaired with his fleet to the coaſt where the fair one dwelt, who was ſoon conducted to him. She had however ſufficient addreſs and aſcendant over him to obtain that their marriage ſhould not be ſolemnized till they returned to Denmark, and could celebrate it in preſence of the whole court.

This relation, which is literally copied from the original, ſhews that decency and decorum were not unknown to the Scandinavians of thoſe days: for to ſee theſe obſerved in a caſe where even among the moſt poliſhed people they are too often neglected, and where the moſt bewitching of all paſſions, when aided by power, unites to caſt a veil over them, is the ſtrongeſt evidence that can poſſibly be required. For the reſt, I will not promiſe that the ancient writer, who has given us this ſtory, may not have added ſome circumſtances of his own; though the traditionary records of the country confirm his narrative, and Torfæus places it among the beſt-authenticated hiſtories: but even ſuppoſing the greateſt part of it fictitious, it is enough that it be ancient, and written by one well verſed in the hiſtory and manners of his country. It is really of little conſequence whether Regner actually performed, or not, every action the chronicles relate, provided they attribute nothing to him but what correſponds with the genius and character of his contemporaries.

It were eaſy to produce other inſtances to juſtify the deſcription I have drawn above, but it is enough to relate only one more, which we meet with in the life of HARALD HARFAGRE, of whom we have

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ſo often ſpoken. His birth and merits were equally illuſtrious; his courage, his fine figure, and his long golden ſilky locks, conſpired to render him, according to our chronicles, the ſecret paſſion of the moſt lovely princeſſes of his time.

Notwithſtanding theſe accompliſhments, a young beauty named GIDA, the daughter of a rich Norwegian lord, made him experience a reſiſtance to which he had not been accuſtomed. Harald, in love with her from hearſay, commiſſioned ſome lords of his court to make her an offer of his hand: but far from readily accepting a propoſal which would have rendered her the envy of all the young ladies of the North, ſhe haughtily anſwered, That to merit her love Harald ſhould ſignalize himſelf by more noble exploits than he had hitherto performed; that ſhe diſdained to ſhare the fortune of a prince whoſe territories were ſo ſmall, and that ſhe could never eſteem him worthy of her, till like the other ſovereigns of the North, he had reduced all Norway under his power. Inſtead of being piqued at this refuſal, Harald's admiration for the ambitious Gida was redoubled, and he made a vow to neglect his fine hair, till he had compleated the conqueſt of Norway: nor did

he marry her, till all that kingdom ſubmitted to him *.

Now it is not to be ſuppoſed that ſentiments of this ſort were peculiar only to Harald, Regner, or ſome one ſingle hero. The northern chronicles preſent us every where with inſtances of this female ſovereignty: and we always find none more ſubject to it than thoſe who were moſt diſtinguiſhed for their noble birth and gallant actions.

As few young men of any rank were able to obtain an advantageous or honourable alliance, until they had diſtinguiſhed themſelves in war, we may naturally conclude they could not marry till late in life. This is alſo confirmed by other proofs. Cæſar ſays, that "among the Germans, "the greateſt praiſe is allowed to thoſe "who remain the longeſt unmarried; and "that it is reckoned very ſhameful for "young men to be acquainted with women "before they are TWENTY YEARS of "age †." Tacitus adds, that "the Ger-"mans retain the vigour of youth the "longer, by deferring their union with the

* Vid. Torf. H. N. tom. ii. lib. 1.

† Cæſ. de Bell. Gall. lib. vi. 19. — *Hoc ali ſaturam, ali vires, nervoſque confirmari putant.* T.

"other

" other ſex; nor are they in haſte to marry " their daughters *." That age once paſt, it was common for the people of the North to marry two wives or more, and this was a very ancient cuſtom. Men of wealth and power conſidered a number of wives as a mark of grandeur. And according to Tacitus †, political reaſons alſo ſometimes brought about theſe matches, ſince the great were often obliged to yield to the importunity of families which ſought their alliance. The Chriſtian religion, not without great difficulty, got the better of this cuſtom; which ſtill prevailed in the North ſo late as the tenth century. All the children claimed equally from their father, nor was the title of baſtard given to any, unleſs to ſuch as were born without any kind of matrimonial rite. Nevertheleſs, one of the wives ſeems to have poſſeſſed a ſuperior rank, and to have been conſidered as the chief and moſt legitimate. But as it was her diſtinguiſhed prerogative to accompany her lord to the grave or funeral pile, ſhe would hardly be

* Tacit. Germ. c. 20.

† He ſays, the Germans in his time were for the moſt part content with one wife, *Exceptis admodum paucis*, adds he, *qui non libidine, ſed ob nobilitatem plurimis nuptiis ambiuntur*. De mor. Ger. c. 18. T.

an object of envy or jealouſy among the ladies of the preſent age.

The matrimonial ceremonies were very ſimple, and chiefly conſiſted in feaſting *. The bridegroom having obtained the maiden's conſent, together with that of her parents and guardians, appointed the day; and having aſſembled his own relations and friends, ſent ſome of them to receive in his name the bride and her portion from her father. The friends were anſwerable for the charge that was committed to them, and if they abuſed their truſt, the law amerced them in a ſum treble to what was paid for murder. The father or guardian of the young woman attended her alſo to the huſband's houſe, and there gave her into his hands †. After this the new-married pair ſat down to table with their gueſts, who drank to their healths along with thoſe of the gods and heroes. The bride's friends then took her up and bore

* Vid. Dalin. Sueа-Rikes Hiſt. tom. i. c. 9.

† At the ſame time he commonly made ſome ſpeech to this effect: "I "give thee my daughter "in honourable wed-"lock; to have the half "of thy bed, the keeping "of the keys of thy "houſe, one THIRD of "the money thou art at "preſent poſſeſſed of, or "ſhalt poſſeſs hereafter, "and to enjoy the other "rights appointed by "law." *First Edit.*

her

her on their ſhoulders, which was a mark of eſteem among the Goths; her father afterwards led her to the nuptial bed, a great number of lights being carried before her; a cuſtom known to the Greeks and Romans, and ſtill in uſe in ſome parts of the North. The marriage being conſummated, the huſband made his wife ſeveral preſents, ſuch as a pair of oxen for the plough, an harneſſed horſe, a buckler, together with a lance and a ſword. "This "was to ſignify," ſays Tacitus*, "that "ſhe ought not to lead an idle and luxurious life, but that ſhe was to be a "partaker with him in his labours, and a "companion in dangers, which they were "to ſhare together in peace and war." He adds that "the women on their parts "gave ſome arms; this was the ſacred "band of their union, theſe their myſtic "rites, and theſe the deities who preſided "over their marriage." The yoked oxen, the capariſoned horſe, and the arms, all ſerved to inſtruct the women how they were to lead their life, and how perhaps it might be terminated. The arms were to be carefully preſerved, and being enobled by the uſe the huſband made of them, were to be conſigned as portions

* Tac. de mor. Germ. c. 18.

for their daughters, and to be handed down to poſterity.

The German women have been juſtly noted for fidelity to the marriage-bed; and indeed chaſtity ſeems to have been the general character of this nation. Let us ſee what that moſt excellent writer Tacitus ſays on this ſubject: "A ſtrict regard for "the ſanctity of the matrimonial ſtate "characterizes the Germans, and deſerves "our higheſt applauſe. . . . . Among "them female virtue runs no hazard of "being debauched by the outward objects "which are preſented to the ſenſes, or of "being corrupted by ſuch ſocial gaieties "as inflame the paſſions. The art of "correſpending by letters is equally un-"known to both ſexes. Very few adul-"teries happen in that populous nation: "where the power of inſtantly inflicting "puniſhment is granted to the injured "huſband; who after having cut off her "hair in the preſence of her relations, "drives her naked out of his houſe, and "whips her through the village. Chaſtity "once proſtituted is never forgiven; nor "to ſuch an one can the attractions of "beauty, youth or riches procure an huſ-"band. Vice is not there made the ob-"ject of wit and mirth; nor can the "faſhion of the age be pleaded in excuſe

"either

" either for being corrupt, or for endea-
" vouring to corrupt others. . . . . Good
" cuſtoms and manners avail more among
" theſe barbarians, than good laws among
" a more refined people *."

Our own hiſtorical monuments confirm theſe teſtimonies. I have before obſerved, that their religion threatened the ſeducers of women with the ſevereſt torments of the next world. Adam of Bremen in his voyage to Denmark obſerves, that adultery was there moſt ſtrictly puniſhed; and that the woman who was detected in it, was ſold on the ſpot. The law in Iceland was equally remarkable; for it not only denounced very ſevere puniſhments againſt rapes and adulteries, but proceeded farther; expreſsly prohibiting even kiſſing or ſecret embraces. Whoever kiſſed a woman againſt her own conſent was condemned to exile; and even with her conſent, he was fined three marks of ſilver. Every degree of this crime was rated in the ſame proportion. If a man abuſed a free woman he was puniſhed with death; and if one that had been freed, with baniſhment; if a ſlave, he was amerced three marks †. Among the Swedes and Danes, the huſband who

* Tacit. Germ. c. 18, 19.
† Arngrim. Jon. Crymog. p. 89.

caught his wife in the act of adultery, might immediately kill her, and caſtrate the gallant. Saxo takes notice of the ſame law, which he attributes to king Frotho *.

When the people of the North migrated into the ſouthern parts of Europe, they carried along with their laws, a chaſtity and reſerve, which excited univerſal ſurprize. Salvian, a prieſt of Marſeilles in the 15th century, exclaims, "Let us bluſh," ſays he, "and be covered with a confuſion "which ought to produce ſalutary effects. "Wherever the Goths become maſters, "we ſee no longer any diſorders, except "among the old inhabitants. Our manners are reformed under the dominion "of Vandals. Behold an incredible event! "an unheard-of prodigy! Barbarians have "by the ſeverity of their diſcipline rendered chaſte the Romans themſelves: "and the Goths have purified thoſe places "which the others had defiled by their "debaucheries. A cruel nation," adds he, "but worthy to be admired for their continence †." Theſe virtues were not there of long continuance; the climate ſoon warmed their frozen imaginations; their

* Sax. Gram. lib. v.

† Salvian. lib. vii. de Gubern. Dei.

laws

laws by degrees relaxed, and their manners ſtill more than their laws.

A numerous offspring was commonly produced from theſe marriages; but neither the rich, nor the poor ſcrupled to expoſe ſuch of their children as they did not chuſe to bring up*. Both the Greeks and Romans were guilty of this barbarous practice, long before they can be ſaid to have been corrupted by proſperity, luxury and the arts: So true is it that ignorance is no ſecurity from vice, and that men always know enough to invent crimes. It is no leſs remarkable, that a kind of infant baptiſm was practiſed in the North, long before the firſt dawning of Chriſtianity had reached thoſe parts. Snorro Sturleſon, in his Chronicle, ſpeaking of a Norwegian nobleman, who lived in the reign of Harald Harfagre, relates, that he poured water on the head of a new-born child, and called him HACON, from the name of his father †. Harald himſelf had been baptized in the ſame manner, and it is noted of king OLAVE TRYGGUESON, that his mother Aſtride had him thus baptized and named as ſoon as he was born. The Livonians obſerved

* Vid. Verel. Not. ad Hervor. cap. vi. p. 87.
† Vid. Snor. Sturleſ. c. lxx.

the ſame ceremony; which alſo prevailed among the Germans, as appears from a letter which the famous pope Gregory the Third ſent to their apoſtle Boniface, directing him expreſsly how to act in this reſpect *. It is probable that all theſe people might intend by ſuch a rite to preſerve their children from the ſorceries and evil charms which wicked ſpirits might employ againſt them at the inſtant of their birth. Several nations of Aſia and America have attributed ſuch a power to ablutions of this kind; nor were the Romans without ſuch a cuſtom, though they did not wholly confine it to new-born infants †.

I ſhall not here repeat what I have ſaid above concerning the hardy way of bringing up children in the North. But I cannot omit mentioning the great advantages gained from it in reſpect to their health and bodily force. The Greek and Latin authors ſpeak with ſurprize of the ſize and ſtrength of the northern men.

* Vid. Epiſt. 122. apud Nic. Serar. in Epiſt. Sti Bonifacii martyris.

† Vid. Keyſler. Antiq. Select. p. 313. who has a very learned NOTE on this ſubject, where he has collected together a number of curious paſſages from authors ancient and modern, Claſſic and Barbarous writers, relating to this practice. T.

Cæſar obſerves of the Suevi, that they feed chiefly on milk, and exerciſe themſelves much in hunting, which together with the free unreſtrained life they lead, never being from their childhood impelled againſt their inclinations to any diſcipline or duty, he aſſigns as effective cauſes of their very large and robuſt make *. Vegetius expreſsly affirms, that the tallneſs of the Germans gave them great advantage in combat over the leſſer Romans. The lances, ſwords and other arms which have been preſerved to this time, and may yet continue to more remote ages, are objects of curioſity and aſtoniſhment to thoſe whoſe anceſtors were able to wield them. But the greateſt proof of their prodigious ſtrength ariſes from the rude enormous monuments of architecture which were raiſed by theſe northern people. We have all heard of that monument on Saliſbury plain in England, where we ſee a multitude of vaſt ſtones of monſtrous weight ſet up end-wiſe, and ſerving as baſes to other ſtones, many of which are in length ſixteen feet. Nor are the monuments of this kind leſs aſtoniſhing, which we meet with in Iceland, in Weſtphalia, and particularly in Eaſt-Friezeland, Brunſ-

* Bell. Gall. lib. iv. c. 1.

wick, Mecklenburg, and many parts of the North *. The dark ignorance of ſucceeding ages not being able to comprehend how ſuch ſtupendous edifices could be conſtructed by mortals, have attributed them to demons and giants. But although the founders of theſe had not probably all the aſſiſtance we derive from the mechanic powers, yet great things might be accompliſhed by men of ſuch mighty force cooperating together †. The Americans, unaided by the engines we apply to theſe pur-

* A deſcription of moſt of the monuments abovementioned, with their figures engraven on copper-plates, may be ſeen in KEYSLER. Antiq. Select. Septen. Sect. i. cap. 1. (cui titulus *Deſcriptio monumenti Saliſburienſis, ſimiliumque quæ in Germania terriſque Arctois cernuntur.*) T.

† In an ancient Icelandic chronicle mention is made of a Norwegian named FINBOG, celebrated for his ſtrength. One day, ſays the Author, he pulled up an enormous ſtone, that was deep fixed in the earth, he took two other great ſtones and placed them upon it, he carried them all three upon his belly for ſome minutes, and at length threw them from him with ſuch violence that the greateſt of them remained buried a great way in the earth. (Vid. Chriſt. Worm. Diſſ. de Araæ Multiſc. vit. & ſcript. p. 172.)

A multitude of ſuch men uniting together might be able to diſplace large and heavy fragments of rocks, and by means of the ſcaffolding they uſed, viz. artificial banks, &c. might be able to ſet them upright. *Firſt Edit.*

poſes,

poſes, have raiſed up ſuch vaſt ſtones in building their temples, as we dare not undertake to remove *. One may however conceive that patience united with ſtrength, might by taking time, be able to move ſuch vaſt bodies from one place to another, and afterwards to ſet them up an end, by means of artificial banks, down the ſlopes of which they made them ſlide. It is without diſpute from ſuch proofs of the great ſize and ſtrength of the firſt inhabitants of the earth, that ancient hiſtory has generally painted them as giants. The atmoſphere, which was formerly more cold and bracing in Europe than it is now †, the continual exerciſes which men then perſiſted in, together with their continence, their avoiding an early commerce with the other ſex,

* See ACOSTA's Hiſt. of the Indies, lib. vi. cap. 14. This author ſpeaking of the buildings and fortreſſes which the Incas had erected in Cuſco, and other places of Peru, ſays "they uſed no mortar "nor cement, neither "had iron nor ſteel to "cut the ſtones with; "no engines or other "inſtruments to carry "them; and yet they "were ſo artificially "wrought that in many "places the joints are "hardly ſeen:" and as for their ſize, he aſſures us he meaſured one of the ſtones himſelf, which was "38 feet long, 18 feet "broad, and ſix thick. "And in the wall of the "fortreſs of Cuſco there "are ſtones of a ſtill "greater bigneſs." T.

† See on this ſubject the concluſion of the next chapter.

their ſimple diet and ſavage life, in the fatigues of which the mind bore no part, were without doubt the cauſes which produced ſuch enormous vegetables; and will convince us, whenever the like circumſtances again occur, that Nature, ever young and inexhauſtible, will always produce the like effects.

To that wonderful conſtitutional vigor the Scandinavians were indebted for ſuch a long and healthy old age as many of them enjoyed: an advantage which they for the moſt part only regarded with indifference, and even with diſdain, though ſo highly valued by mankind ſince the acquiſition of arts, and the refinements of pleaſure have ſhortened the date, but rendered the journey of life more agreeable. In truth, few of them awaited the diſtant period allotted by nature; ſingle combats or general engagements, the dangers and fatigues of the ſea, together with the frequent practice of ſuicide, were ſo many paſſages ever open to conduct them to that glorious path which they thought led to a happy futurity. The influence which this doctrine had upon their minds, cannot be more particularly ſeen, than in the cuſtoms obſerved in their laſt ſcene of life and funeral ceremonies. In the moſt early ages theſe were very ſimple. Before the

arrival

arrival of Odin the Scandinavians did nothing more than lay the dead body, together with his arms, under a little heap of earth and ſtones; but He introduced into the North new cuſtoms attended with more magnificence. In the ſucceeding ages the Danes were wont to raiſe funeral piles, and reduce the bodies to aſhes; which were collected together into an urn, and depoſited under a little mount of earth. But this foreign cuſtom was never quite univerſal, and the old rite took place again, according to conjecture, within five or ſix hundred years. Theſe two funeral ceremonies have diſtinguiſhed two diſtinct æras in the ancient northern hiſtory. The firſt was called the AGE OF FIRE *, and the ſecond the AGE OF HILLS †; which laſt prevailed 'till Chriſtianity triumphed in the North.

When an hero or chief fell glorioufly in battle, his funeral obſequies were honoured with all poſſible magnificence. His arms, his gold and ſilver, his war-horſe, his domeſtic attendants, and whatever elſe he held moſt dear, were placed with him on the pile. His dependants and friends frequently made it a

* *Brenne-Alderen.*

† *Hog-Alderen:* That is, the Age of Little Hills, or BARROWS, as they are called in the ſouth-weſt parts of this iſland. T.

point of honour to die with their leader, in order to attend on his ſhade in the palace of Odin. And laſtly, his wife was generally conſumed with him on the ſame pile. If the defunct, as was often the caſe, had more wives than one, the privilege of following her dead lord to his grave was claimed by her who had been his chief favourite during life. In this manner was Nanna conſumed in the ſame fire with the body of her huſband Balder, one of Odin's companions*. In the hiſtory of Olave Trygueſon, left us by an old Icelandic writer, we have a memorable paſſage relative to this ſtrange cuſtom: "ERIC "king of Sweden (ſays this author) put "away his wife Segride on account of her "intolerably inſolent and imperious tem- "per. But others aſſert that her diſmiſ- "ſion was a voluntary act of her own, be- "cauſe ſhe had learnt that her huſband "had but ten years to live, and that ſhe "ſhould be obliged to be buried with him, "according to the uſage of the country. "For Eric had made a vow during the "heat of an engagement, to put an end to "his own life at the completion of that

* Vid. Edda Mythol. 43. et vid. etiam Hiſt. Norveg. Torf. paſſim. Olof. Trygguaſons Saga, c. 2. et Keyſler Antiq. Sel. p. 147.

" ſpace of time." This ſhews, that the Scandinavian women were not always willing to make ſo cruel and abſurd a ſacrifice to the manes of their huſbands; the idea of which had been picked up by their Scythian anceſtors, when they inhabited the warmer climates of Aſia, where they had had their firſt abode. In ſome parts of the Indies this cuſtom is ſtill, and ever has been religiouſly obſerved. " The " ſame lively imaginations and the ſame " delicate nerves" (as the ſenſible author of the Spirit of Laws well remarks) " which " inſpire the people of theſe hot climates " with the fear of death, make them at " the ſame time dread a thouſand things " worſe even than death itſelf." Although it was thus founded on a principle of religion, ſuch an abſurd cuſtom has long ſubſided in Europe. Cæſar obſerves, that this uſage had ceaſed in Gaul long before the Romans were acquainted with them *. The Germans, in the time of Tacitus, were content to give their departed friends their horſes to accompany them; and in all probability if it had not been for the inſtitutions of Odin, theſe ſacrifices of the wives

* Cæſar de bell. Gall. lib. vi. c. 19. Pomp. Mela, lib. iii. c. 8.

to the manes of their dead lords had been abolished much earlier in Scandinavia.

Be that as it would: Nothing seemed to them more grand and noble than to enter the hall of Odin with a numerous retinue of slaves, friends and horses, all in their finest armour and richest apparel. The princes and nobles never failed of such attendants. His arms, and the bones of the horse on which Chilperic I. supposed he should be presented to this warrior God have been found in his tomb. They did in reality firmly believe, and Odin himself had assured them, that whatever was buried or consumed with the dead, accompanied them to his palace. The poorer people, from the same persuasion, carried at least their most necessary utensils and a little money, not to be entirely destitute in the other world. From a like motive, the Greeks and Romans put a piece of silver into the dead man's mouth, to pay his passage over the Styx. The Laplanders to this day provide their dead with a flint and every thing necessary for lighting them along the dark passage they have to traverse after death. In whatever degree civilized nations resemble the savage part of mankind, their strongest features are those which respect religion, death and a future state. Men cannot contemplate these interesting

tereſting objects coolly, nor uninfluenced by ſuch hopes and fears as ſhackle and impede the proper exertion of their reaſoning faculties. Accordingly all that the theology of the Egyptians, the Greeks and Romans, thoſe people in other reſpects ſo wiſe, taught them on many points, was only one great delirium, and was (if we conſider it impartially) in no reſpect ſuperior to that of the ancient Celts and Scandinavians; if indeed it was not more indecent and extravagant ſtill than theirs.

Odin was ſuppoſed to guard theſe rich depoſits from the ſacrilegious attempts of rapine by means of certain ſacred and wandering fires which played round the tombs. And for their better ſecurity the law promulged its ſevereſt edicts againſt all offences of this kind. The nineteenth chapter of the Salic-law is full of the different puniſhments decreed againſt ſuch as ſhall carry off the boards or carpeting with which the ſepulchres were covered; and interdicts them from fire and water. This law appears to have been well obſerved in the North during the times of paganiſm, ſince in digging into old burial grounds there are now frequently found arms, ſpurs, rings, and different kinds of vaſes. Such were the contents of the tomb that was opened near Guben in

Germany *. The perſon who had been interred there, ſeems to have been a lover of good chear; for he had carried with him ſeveral utenſils of cookery, together with flagons and drinking veſſels of all ſizes. In the Britiſh Iſles, in Germany, in Scandinavia, and in many countries in the northern and eaſtern parts of Aſia, are found monuments of the ancient inhabitants, in the form of little round hills and often ſurrounded with ſtones, on open plains or near ſome road. It is the received opinion that theſe are the burying places of giants, and indeed bones larger than the human ſize are often found in them; but we muſt remember that as the ancients durſt not approach the palace of Odin on foot, and for that reaſon had their horſes buried with them, it is very probable that the bones of theſe animals are often miſtaken for thoſe of men.

* *Nimiſchæ in pago uno milliari a Gubena diſtante univerſus adparatus culinarius erutus, cacabi, ollæ, catini, phialæ, patinæ, urceoli, lagenulæ, &c.* Vide Keyſler. Antiq. Select. Septen. p. 173. T.

CHAPTER XIII.

Sequel of the cuſtoms, arts and ſciences of the ancient Scandinavians.

THE arts which are neceſſary to the convenience of life, are but indifferently cultivated among a people, who neglect the more pleaſing and refined ones. The Scandinavians held them all equally in contempt: What little attention they beſtowed on any, was chiefly on ſuch as were ſubſervient to their darling paſſion. This contempt for the arts, which mens' deſire of juſtifying their own ſloth inſpires, received additional ſtrength from their ſanguinary religion, from their extravagant fondneſs for liberty, which could not brook a long confinement in the ſame place, and eſpecially from their rough, fiery and quarrelſome temper, which taught them to place all the happineſs and glory of man in being able to brave his equals and to repel inſults.

As long as this inclination had its full ſway among a people, who were perpetually migrating from one foreſt to another, and entirely maintained from the produce of their flocks and herds, they never thought of cultivating the ſoil. In the time of Tacitus, the Germans were little uſed to agriculture. "They cultivate," ſays that hiſtorian, "ſometimes one part "of the country, and ſometimes another; "and then make a new diviſion of the "lands. They will much eaſier be per-"ſuaded to attack and reap wounds from "an enemy, than to till the ground and "wait the produce. They conſider it as "an indication of effeminacy and want of "courage to gain by the ſweat of their "brow, what they may acquire at the "price of their blood *." This prejudice gradually wore out, and they applied themſelves more to agriculture. The great conſumption of grain in a country, where the principal part of their food and their ordinary liquor was chiefly made of nothing elſe, could not but produce this effect. In the ninth and tenth centuries we ſee the free-men, the nobility and the men of great property, directing the operations of huſbandry themſelves †. At length Chriſtianity

* Tac. Germ. c. 14, &c.

† Vid. Arng. Jon. Crymog. lib. i. p. 52.

having

having entirely extinguiſhed the taſte for piracy, and thus reſtored to the land one half of its inhabitants, laid them under a neceſſity of deriving from thence all their ſubſiſtence.

But the other arts were ſtill depreſſed under the influence of this prejudice, and were for a long time conſidered as abject occupations befitting none but ſlaves; which not only diſhonoured the preſent profeſſors, but even fixed a ſtain on all their poſterity *. The Gauls, the Germans, and the Scandinavians never employed in any of their domeſtic and handicraft trades other than ſlaves, freed-men, women or ſuch miſerable old men as preferred a diſhonourable life to death. They were of courſe ignorant of all the pleaſing conveniences and ornaments of life, excepting ſuch as they either acquired by violence in their piratical excurſions, or gained to themſelves by foreign ſervice. Their wives ſpun themſelves the wool which made one part of their cloathing, and ſkins ſupplied

* The Greeks and Romans did not think more philoſophically on this ſubject than theſe rude uncivilized nations: if indeed it can be called Philoſophy, and not rather Common Senſe, to eſtimate things in proportion to their utility, and to be ſenſible that we owe to the Arts moſt of the comforts we enjoy. *Firſt Edit.*

the reſt. Their habits ſat cloſe to their bodies, and were ſhort and neat like thoſe of all the 'Gothic*' nations: not wide, long and flowing like thoſe of the Sarmatians and eaſtern people. They were perhaps ſtill leſs luxurious in their manner of lodging.

In the time of Tacitus, the Germans had not yet built themſelves cities, or even towns: "Every one," ſays that author, "places his houſe on whatever ſpot he "chuſes, near a ſpring, a wood or open "field, at a diſtance from any neighbour, "either from ignorance in the art of "building, or for fear of fire †." When religion permitted temples to be erected to the Gods, the concourſe of thoſe who came to offer oblations, engaged them to build round about them, and towns inſenſibly aroſe. The ſame thing happened near the caſtles of their kings, princes and great

* (Celtic. *Orig.*) In the habits of the ancient Gothic nations we ſee evidently the rudiments of the modern European dreſs: They conſiſted of a kind of waiſtcoat, and breeches, or rather a kind of trowſers which came down to the feet, and were connected with the ſhoes; whereas the ancient Romans were naked knee'd. Upon the pillars of Trajan and Antonine the dreſſes of ſuch nations as were of Gothic race bear a great reſemblance to thoſe of our common ſailors and peaſants. T.

† Tac. Germ. c. 16.

men;

men; and laſtly, the markets, whither the peaſants repaired for the mutual exchange of thoſe few commodities in which the trade of theſe days conſiſted, gave birth to a third kind of towns, which ſtill in their names bear evident traces of their original *. The houſes of which theſe towns conſiſted were nothing better, for the moſt part, than cottages ſupported by thick heavy poſts joined together by boards and covered with turf †. The very loweſt rank of people were not even ſo well off; having no other defence from the ſeverity of the winter, but only miſerable huts, ditches or clefts in the rocks. There lying on the bare ground, half covered with a few ſkins tacked together with thorns, they paſſed their time in a kind of drowſy torpor, (happy, if it be poſſible to be ſo by the meer privation of misfortunes) till rouſed by ſome call of war, all this ferocious and ſavage youth ruſhed from their caverns to go to ſet fire to the palaces of Rome, and to trample under foot all the fine monuments of lux-

* The general termination of theſe is *Koping*, i. e. Market.

† In theſe buildings the light for the moſt part was only received from the top; whether it was that the uſe of windows was then unknown, or regarded by the ſages of the country as a dangerous luxury. Vid. Arngr. Jon. Crymog. lib. i. c. 6. *Firſt Edit.*

try, induſtry and arts. But I again repeat it, that it was only a ſmall part of this people who lived ſo totally ignorant of the conveniences of life. Their grandees were early diſtinguiſhed by edifices ſumptuous for thoſe times. Their chief ambition was to have them of vaſt extent, and adorned with very lofty towers. The moſt wealthy of thoſe Norwegian lords who ſettled in Iceland built there houſes of monſtrous greatneſs. Arngrim * aſſures us, that Ingulph's palace was 135 feet in length; and mentions others not inferior to it; but it is very likely that theſe were only a kind of covered incloſures which took in both their ſlaves and cattle. The moſt valuable ornaments of their palaces were the cielings, on which were repreſented in ſculpture the memorable actions of the poſſeſſor or his anceſtors. Fragments of theſe are ſtill found in Iceland, which appear to have been done eight hundred years ago, and contribute to throw light on the hiſtory of the country. Nor is this ſculpture ſo bad as might be expected. The mountaineers of Norway and Sweden have to this day a remarkable dexterity at carving with the knife, and in the cabinets of the curious are preſerved many pieces which

* Vid. Crymog. p. 57.

ſurprizingly

ſurprizingly ſhew how far genius can advance unaſſiſted by art*. Such of the Scandinavians as ſettled in richer countries, ſoon adopted the luxury of their new fellow-citizens, and were as deſirous as they of diſtinguiſhing themſelves by ſumptuous buildings. But although they had ſtill before their eyes thoſe fine monuments which the envious hand of time has denied to us, yet the beautiful and noble ſimplicity of the antique proportions eſcaped them; they disfigured them by that affectation of exceſſive ornament, from whence ſprang the Gothic ſtile of architecture, ſo called from this people, which ſo long prevailed through all Europe, and produced ſo many edifices wherein we can find nothing to admire but the inexhauſtible patience and infinite pains of thoſe who built them.

We may judge from the foregoing pages of the ſtate of commerce in ancient Scandinavia. It is true, the fondneſs of the inhabitants for navigation ought to have been favourable to it; but we know that piracy, which is the reſult of idleneſs in thoſe who practiſe it, reduces to idleneſs thoſe who ſuffer by it, as it renders all induſtry

* Vid. Pontoppid. Hiſt. Nat. Norv. tom. ii. c. 10.

uſeleſs. We muſt not however ſuppoſe, that this people carried on no kind of traffic. I think one may diſcover ſome views of this ſort in thoſe maritime expeditions of the Norwegians which have been related above: and this conjecture ſeems to be confirmed by the great quantity of foreign money which is ſtill found in different parts of the North; if indeed this is not rather reliques of the plunder collected by theſe ravagers. It is probable that for a long time commerce was carried on by means of this foreign coin, in thoſe parts where they had a ſufficient quantity of it, and in other places by an exchange of commodities. We do not find that there was any money coined in the three northern kingdoms before the tenth or at moſt the ninth century; and there is reaſon to believe, it was Canute the Great who firſt brought over Engliſhmen for the purpoſe of coining thoſe little pieces of copper money which are ſtill ſhewn, and are generally impreſſed with the figure of a croſs, the ſun, or a ſtar, without any letters or inſcription. Under the pagan princes, money was alſo much in uſe as the common medium of value, but it ſeems to have only paſſed by weight.

We may readily ſuppoſe that the Scandinavians ſtudied aſtronomy. A ſcience ſo

requiſite for ſailors could not but make a great part of the education of a people who aſpired to fame by maritime enterprizes. The ancient chronicles frequently preſent us with young warriors endeavouring to acquire the good opinion of their miſtreſſes by boaſting of their accompliſhments, ſuch as their ſkill at cheſs, their dexterity in ſwimming and ſkating, their talents in poetry, and their knowing all the ſtars by their names. Theſe names had nothing in common with thoſe adopted by the Greeks and Romans; and were often founded on reaſons as fantaſtical as theirs. Thus they called *Urſa Major* the GREAT DOG, and the leſſer Bear CHARLES'S WAIN: 'The 'three ſtars in the belt of' Orion, FRIGGA'S DISTAFF; the Swan, THE CROSS; the Milky-way, the ROAD OF WINTER; &c. But whether they only applied their knowledge of aſtronomy to conduct them in their voyages, or endeavoured, like the reſt of the world, to read their deſtiny in the ſtars, is a matter I am not able to decide. Their curious prying into future events by other means equally ridiculous, will not allow them to claim any merit from either their ignorance or neglect of judicial aſtrology. All we can ſay with certainty is, that they have at all times beſtowed great care and attention in regulating

the courſe of time; whether their religion, which preſcribed them certain periodical ſacrifices, rendered that care neceſſary; or whether it proceeded from that peculiar turn which the northern people have ever ſhewn for calculation and numbers *. Their year commonly commenced at the winter-ſolſtice, and they divided it into two half years, or intervals between the two ſolſtices †, which were again divided into quarters and months. There was

* It is remarkable that the Scandinavians numbered the unities up to Twelve, without ſtopping at Ten like all other nations. This manner of counting is preferable to ours, as Twelve is a more perfect number, and more eaſily broken into fractions, than Ten. The Icelanders and the peaſants of certain provinces in Sweden, retain to this day a method of reckoning by Great Hundreds and Little Hundreds, Great Thouſands and Little Thouſands: But they ſeem to have confounded their ancient manner of computation with the modern, ſince they make their Great Hundred to conſiſt of 20 times 12 or 120, and their Great Thouſand of 1200, inſtead of multiplying regularly 12 by 12. (Vid. Dal. Su. Rik. Hiſt. tom. i. p. 245. et Arngr. Jon. Crymog. lib. i. p. 85.)

Firſt Edit.

The ſame method of reckoning by the Great and Little Hundred ſtill prevails among our Engliſh farmers, in their ſale of cheeſe, &c. Their Great Hundred is 120 lb. their Little Hundred 112 lb. T.

† That is, by Summer and Winter, as we in our ordinary converſation do in England. T.

great

great variety in the names of theſe months, which were borrowed generally from the rural occupations to be performed in each of them, or from the religious ceremonies which were then to be obſerved; theſe names are ſtill in uſe in many places of the North *. The months were divided into weeks of ſeven days, a diviſion which hath prevailed among almoſt all the nations we have any knowledge of, from the extremity of Aſia to that of Europe. The day was divided into twelve parts, to each of which they aſſigned a diſtinct name: but in their

* Vid. Ol. Worm. Faſt. Danic. paſſim.

Dr. HICKES in his valuable *Theſaurus Ling. Septentrion.* has given a curious liſt of the names of the months in all the northern languages, including thoſe of our Anglo-Saxon anceſtors. In all theſe languages they are very ſignificant, as the reader will judge from thoſe of the Icelandic: In which JANUARY was called *Midfuetrar-manudr*, the midwinter month. FEBRUARY, *Foſtensgangs-manudr*, the faſting-proceſſion-month. MARCH, *Jaffadegra-manudr*, the month of equal day and night. MAY, *Fardaga-manudr*, the month of fair days. JUNE, *Nottleyſa-manudr*, the night-leſs month. JULY, *Madka-manudr*, the inſect month. AUGUST, *Heyanna-manudr*, the hay-making month. SEPTEMBER, *Addraata-manudr*, ... OCTOBER, *Slatrunar-manudr*, the ſlaughter-month. NOVEMBER, *Rydtrydar-manudr*, ... DECEMBER, *Skamdeiges-manudr*, the month of ſhort days. Vid. Hickes Gram. Mæſo-Goth. p. 215, 216. T.

computation of time, they made uſe of the word NIGHT inſtead of DAY. Tacitus obſerves the ſame thing of the Germans *; and the Engliſh have ſtill, on ſome occaſions, the ſame mode of ſpeaking †. The longeſt night of winter was conſidered in the North, as that which had produced all the reſt as well as the days; hence they termed it the MOTHER-NIGHT ‡, and were perſuaded that on ſuch a night the world was created. This notion certainly gave birth to the mode of expreſſion above-related.

The neceſſity of aſſiſting the memory, led them early to invent a kind of Calendars, which they called RUNIC STAFFS. Theſe were a ſort of compendious almanacks marked out by lines upon ſhort pieces of board, or ſmooth ſticks ‖. Some of them bear the appearance of great antiquity, but I believe there are none which do not carry evident marks that their

* *Nec dierum numerum ut nos, ſed* NOCTIUM *computant. Sic conſtituunt, ſic condicunt, nox ducere diem videtur.* Tacit. Germ. c. 11.

† Thus we ſay SEVENNIGHT, (not Seven Days) and FORTNIGHT, *i. e.* Fourteen Nights, (not Fourteen Days.) T.

‡ See above, chap. VII. p. 130.

‖ They were called in the North *Rim-ſtocks*, and *Prim-ſtaffs:* they exhibited by different lines and marks, the Faſts and Feſtivals, the Golden Number, Dominical Letter, Epact, &c. T.

owners

owners were Chriſtians. The Pagans however may have had inſtruments of this kind; which the firſt princes converted to Chriſtianity might alter and adapt to the Chriſtian rites. The Runic characters with which they are always inſcribed, together with ſome other marks of paganiſm, ſeem to prove this: But the queſtion cannot poſitively be decided 'till we have examined whether the Scandinavians were acquainted with the uſe of letters before they had embraced Chriſtianity. This is a fruitful queſtion which deſerves particular diſcuſſion.

One cannot travel far in Denmark, Norway or Sweden, without meeting with great ſtones of different forms, engraven with thoſe ancient characters called RUNIC *, which appear at firſt ſight extremely different from all we know. The few who have endeavoured to decipher

* Runic inſcriptions are alſo found in this iſland: See a deſcription of a very curious one in Cumberland, and of another in Scotland, in Hickes's Theſaur. Ling. Sept. (*Gram. Iſland.* Tab. VI. & p. 5.) See alſo Gordon's Itinerarium Septentrionale, p. 168. There is even extant a coin of king OFFA with a Runic inſcription; whence it ſhould ſeem that this character had been originally uſed by the Saxons, as well as their Scandinavian brethren. T.

them, have diſcovered that theſe inſcriptions are, for the moſt part, only epitaphs, written in a language not leſs obſolete than the characters *. Several of them were undoubtedly written in Pagan times: but as a great part of them bear evident marks of Chriſtianity, ſome learned men of diſtinction have thought that the German and Scandinavian miſſionaries firſt inſtructed their converts in the art of writing. The favourers of this opinion alledge ſeveral proofs in ſupport of it, which deſerve ſome attention.

They produce the teſtimony of ſeveral Greek and Latin authors to invalidate what the northern literati have aſſerted concerning the great antiquity of the RUNIC character. Androtion, quoted by Elian †, aſſures us, that "neither the Thracians, nor "any other of the barbarous people ſettled

* The manner in which our author ſpeaks of the Runic inſcriptions, ſhews him but little acquainted with this part of his ſubject: the Runic characters are not difficult to read to thoſe who are moderately converſant in northern antiquities, and the language of them is no other than the antient Icelandic, in which there are innumerable books extant in the libraries of the North. Almoſt all the Runic inſcriptions found in the North have been publiſhed in one collection or other. T

† Ælian. Var. Hiſt. lib. viii. c. 6. Vid. Pelloutier Hiſt. des Celtes, tom. i. ch. 10.

"in

" in Europe, make uſe of letters; look-
" ing upon it as ſomewhat diſhonourable
" to employ them: whereas the uſe of
" them is common among the barbarians
" of Aſia." Tacitus is more expreſs on this head. " Both the men and the wo-
" men," ſays he, ſpeaking of the Germans, " are equally ignorant of the
" ſecret of writing letters *." Almoſt all the ancients who ſpeak of the Celts, affirm the ſame thing. They aſſure us, that theſe people held in contempt every occupation, except that of arms; That learning to read and write degraded a perſon in their eyes; That their DRUIDS or prieſts, induced either by intereſt or ſuperſtition, and probably by both, utterly forbade them the uſe of letters, and encouraged them in the averſion they entertained for this admirable ſecret; and That theſe Druids pretended their doctrines ought to be reſerved for the initiated only, and concealed from all others, which could not have been had they committed them to an indiſcreet paper †. They confirm

* *Litterarum ſecreta viri pariter ac feminæ ignorant.* Tac. Germ. c. 19.

† This and moſt of the arguments here produced are taken by our author from M. Pelloutier's Hiſt. des Celtes, liv. ii. ch. 10. whoſe general poſition is, that the GOTHS and CELTS were the ſame people:

confirm all theſe authorities by divers facts. Thus Theodoric king of Italy could not ſo much as ſign the firſt letters of his name, tho' he had ſpent his youth among the Romans. Eginhard, in his life of Charlemagne, ſays, that this emperor, though in other reſpects not unlearned, could not write, and that there were entire nations in Germany ſubject to him, whoſe laws were not yet committed to writing. The Saxons under Louis le Debonnair, perſiſting in their reſolution of not learning to read, he was obliged to have the Old and New Teſtament turned into verſe, which they willingly learned by heart, and ſung after their own manner. Laſtly, the literati, whoſe ſentiments we here give, think they can unravel all the difficulty ariſing from the particular form of the Runic characters, and prove that theſe were not known in the North before Chriſtianity, by reducing them to the Roman letters; from which, ſay they, theſe do not differ any

people; But this is a great miſtake: The Celts or Gauls had DRUIDS, who made a ſecret of their doctrines; but what has this to do with the Gothic nations of Scandinavia, who had no Druids; but profeſſed a very different religion? —— Some of the inſtances that follow are more to the point, being taken from among the Gothic nations, but our author conſiders them below. T.

farther

farther than this, that the people of the North having been obliged at firſt to engrave them in wood and ſtone, found it convenient to draw their letters chiefly in ſtrait lines, and to avoid as much as poſſible all round ſtrokes and turnings *.

Theſe arguments are ſpecious, but are they equally ſolid? It is true the ancients denied that the Celts in general had the knowledge, or at leaſt the uſe of letters among them; but our preſent enquiry only regards the Scandinavians †, and ſuch of

* The word RUNE ſeems to come from a word in the ancient Gothic language ſignifying TO CUT. [So ſays our author, but Wormius, who was a much greater maſter of this ſubject, derives RUNE from either *Ryn* a FURROW, or *Ren* a GUTTER or CHANNEL. As theſe characters were firſt cut in wood or ſtone, the reſemblance to a furrow or channel would eaſily ſuggeſt the appellation. Vid. Worm. Lit. Run. p. 2. 1636. 4to. T.]

The word *Bog Stav*, or *Buch Stab*, which is uſed in Germany and the North to ſignify a letter, is doubtleſs derived from *Bog* or *Buch* a Beech-tree, of which wood they originally made their writing tables, and from *Stav* or *Stab*, a ſtaff or ſtick, becauſe moſt of the letters were drawn in perpendicular lines, as it were "ſticks or ſtaffs ſet up-"right." [Vid. Worm. Lit. Run. p. 6. — From the ſame *Bog* or *Buch* the beſt etymologiſts derive the word BOK or BOOK, which ſignifies a Volume not only in ours, but in all the Gothic or Teutonic languages. Vid. Junii Etymol. T.]

† Who were not Celts. T.

the Germans as lived neareſt them. Theſe are the only people among whom the Runic characters are found, and with them the ancients were leaſt acquainted. As for Tacitus, he has probably been miſunderſtood; thoſe who are acquainted with his ſtile and manner, if they re-conſider the paſſage, will not doubt but this is his meaning, that "both the German men and "women were ignorant of the ſecret of "writing letters or epiſtles," that is, with a view to carry on an intrigue *. What they relate of the Druids chiefly reſpects the Gauls, nor is it equally applicable to the other northern people. We may eaſily ſuppoſe there were among them many warriors and illuſtrious men who could not write, without concluding from thence that the whole nation was equally ignorant. As for the laſt argument which attributes to the firſt miſſionaries the honour of introducing letters into the North; it does not appear to me to carry much weight. The Runic characters might poſſibly be borrowed from the Roman alphabet, without any neceſſary concluſion that the Scandinavians had waited for the ſecret till the

* So the beſt tranſlators of Tacitus, and ſo the Abbé BLETTERIE has rendered this paſſage in his celebrated French verſion.

intro-

introduction of Chriſtianity among them. The Runic letters might even have a great reſemblance to the Roman without being copied from them, ſince both may have been derived from one common original. But the ſtrongeſt argument of all is, that this reſemblance has been nothing leſs than proved; for that the difference between the RUNIC and ROMAN letters is all owing to the neceſſity of writing on wood or ſtone, and of tracing the letters in perpendicular lines, leaves ſuch a latitude for changing, adding or diminiſhing, that there are few alphabets in the world, which by means of ſuch a commodious hypotheſis, might not eaſily be reduced to the Roman character. Accordingly the learned Wormius found the Runic letters as eaſily reducible to the Greek and Hebrew alphabets as to the Roman *.

* Vid. Ol. Worm. Literatur. Runic. paſſim. —— [M. Pelloutier cites in the firſt volume of his Hiſt. des Celtes a manuſcript Diſſertation, the author of which (Mr. CELSIUS, a learned Swede) hath reduced the RUNIC to ROMAN characters. I have read this Diſſertation very carefully: it contains many ingenious conjectures, but they appear to me to be nothing but conjectures. *Firſt Edit.*]

It was that great maſter of northern literature Dr. HICKES, who firſt ſtarted the notion that the Runic character was borrowed from the Roman: See his *Theſaurus Linguar. Septentrion.* &c. But this opinion is now generally given up as unſupportable. T.

We have hitherto only propoſed doubts; Let us now ſee if we can aſcertain ſome truths. The Roman hiſtory tells us, that under the reign of the emperor Valens, ULPHILAS *, biſhop of thoſe Goths who were

* In the year 369. Vid. Socrat. Hiſt. Eccleſ. lib. iv. and Sozomen. lib. vi. 36.

In the following account of ULPHILAS and the GOTHIC letters, our ingenious author has committed ſeveral miſtakes; occaſioned by his too cloſely following WORMIUS in his *Literatur. Run.* not conſidering that ſince the time of Wormius ſome very important diſcoveries have been made, and great light thrown upon this ſubject.

When WORMIUS wrote, the tranſlation of Ulphilas was ſuppoſed to be irrecoverably loſt, and therefore Wormius having nothing to guide him but conjecture, ſuppoſed the Runic character and that of Ulphilas to be the ſame. —— But ſome years after, there was found in the abbey of Werden in Weſtphalia, a very curious fragment of what is believed to have been the identical verſion of ULPHILAS; written in the language of the Mœſo-Goths, and exhibiting the characters which that prelate made uſe of: Theſe are ſo very remote from the Runic, that we may now ſafely allow the Gothic biſhop the honour of their invention, without in the leaſt derogating from the antiquity of the Runic letters. This fragment is now preſerved in the library at UPSAL in Sweden, and is famous among all the northern literati, under the name of the *Codex argenteus*, or Silver Book: for which reaſon a ſhort account of it may not be unacceptable.

The *Codex argenteus* contains at preſent only the four Goſpels, though ſomewhat mutilated; and is believed to be a relic of the Gothic Bible, all or the greater part of which

were ſettled in Moeſia and Thrace, tranſlated the Bible into the Gothic language. But we

which Ulphilas had tranſlated. The leaves are of vellum of a violet colour; all the letters are of ſilver, except the initials, which are of gold. Theſe letters, (which are all capitals) appear not to have been written with the pen, but ſtamped or imprinted on the vellum with hot metal-types *, in the ſame manner as the book-binders at preſent letter the backs of books. This copy is judged to be near as ancient as the time of Ulphilas, or at leaſt not later than a century or two after; yet ſo near was the copyiſt to the diſcovery of printing, that if he had but thought of combining three or four of theſe letters together he muſt have hit upon that admirable invention; whereas he only imprinted each letter ſingly. —— This curious fragment has been ſeveral times printed in 4to, firſt by Junius, in 1665; and lately in a very elegant manner at Oxford by the learned Mr. Lye in 1750. —Another fragment of this curious verſion (containing part of the Epiſtle to the Romans) has been ſince diſcovered in the library at Wolfenbottle, and was publiſhed a few years ago in a very ſplendid volume in 4to by the Rev. F. A. Knitell, archdeacon of Wolfenbottle.

It muſt not be concealed that Mr. Michaelis and one or two other learned men † have oppoſed the current opinion, that the Silver Book contains part of Ulphilas's Gothic verſion; and have offered arguments to prove that it is rather a venerable fragment of ſome very ancient Fancic Bible: but they have been

* See this fully proved in ſome late curious Tracts written by the learned *Dom.* JOHAN. IHRE, and other Swediſh Literati. (Vid. vol. II. p. 355.)

† Viz. M. DE LA CROZE; ſee the Latin Diſſertation at the end of Chamberlayn's "*Oratio Dominica, &c.*" *Amſt.* 1714. 4*to*.

we know from other authorities, that the character in which this verſion was written, was either Runic, or one nearly reſembling it. Several authors ſay, that Ulphilas invented it; but is it probable that any man ſhould form a new alphabet for a nation which had one already? If the Goths of Mœſia and Thrace had not before his time had any knowledge of letters, would it not have been better to have taught them the uſe of the Greek character, already underſtood? Beſides, Ulphilas neither wrote the Goſpels on wood nor on ſtone, but on parchment; he would not therefore be under the neceſſity of disfiguring the alphabet of other nations for the ſake of ſtrait lines, which it is alledged gave birth to the Runic letters.

been confuted by M. Knitell and others; and the Gothic claim has been further confirmed by a curious relic of the ſame language lately diſcovered in Italy, plainly written by one of the ſame Goths, being evidently of their time. The explanation of this we owe to the reverend Mr. LYE: See his Notes on the Gothic Goſpels, &c.

To conclude; The letters uſed in the Gothic Goſpels, being 25 in number, are formed with ſlight variations from the capitals of the Greek and Latin alphabet, and are extremely different from the Runic. The invention of them may therefore be very ſafely attributed to Bp. ULPHILAS (as the ancients expreſsly aſſert); who might not chuſe to employ in ſo ſacred a work as the tranſlation of the Bible, the RUNIC characters, which the Goths had rendered infamous by their ſuperſtitious uſe of them. T.

ters. At moſt it could not be the Roman alphabet that was altered; but if any it muſt have been the Greek, for Ulphilas was at that time in a country where the Greek language was ſpoken. Nor is it difficult to diſcover what it was that led hiſtorians into the miſtake of ſuppoſing Ulphilas to have been the inventor of theſe characters. The Greeks had probably never heard any mention of them before he came among them: The introducer of a novelty eaſily paſſes for the author of it; and when we compare the Runic letters, taken from the inſcriptions ſcattered up and down on the rocks in the North, with the alphabet of Ulphilas, it is eaſy to ſee that the biſhop has added diverſe characters unknown to the ancient Scandinavians. It was doubtleſs the tranſlation of the Bible which obliged him to make theſe additions. The ancient alphabet being compoſed only of ſixteen letters *, could not expreſs many ſounds foreign to the Gothic language, that neceſſarily occurred in that work. Theſe additional letters might eaſily confer on Ulphilas the credit of inventing the whole. This is one of thoſe inaccuracies which every day happen. It is no leſs probable that before Ulphilas, the

* Verel. Runogr. Scand. cap. vii.

Goths, even while they were involved in the thickeſt darkneſs of paganiſm, had ſome knowledge of letters*.

* An evident proof that the RUNIC were not imitated from the ROMAN letters, ariſes not only from their form which have ſo little reſemblance to theſe, but from their number, (being but ſixteen) and their order and names, which have nothing in common with the ROMAN, GREEK or GOTHIC characters of Ulphilas: Let the reader truſt to his own eyes.

The RUNIC Alphabet.

Name,	Fie	Ur	Duſs	Oys	Ridhur	Kaun	Hagl
Figure,	ᚠ	ᚢ	ᚦ	ᚬ	ᚱ	ᚴ	ᚼ
Power,	F.	U.	D.	O.	R.	K.	H.

Nandur	Jis	Aar	Sol	Tyr	Biarkan
ᚾ	ᛁ	ᛅ	ᛋ	ᛏ	ᛒ
N.	I.	A.	S.	T.	B.

Lagur	Madur	Yr
ᛚ	ᛘ	ᛦ
L.	M.	YR.

The GOTHIC Alphabet by ULPHILAS.

Figure,	𐌰	𐌱	𐌲	𐌳	𐌴	𐌵	𐌶	𐌷	𐌹
Power,	A.	B.	G.	D.	E.	F.	I or Y.	H.	I.

𐌺	𐌻	𐌼	𐌽	𐌾	𐌿	𐍀	𐍁	𐍂
K.	L.	M.	N.	O.	P.	Q.	R.	S.

𐍃	𐍄	𐍅	𐍆	𐍇	𐍈	𐍉
T.	TH.	U.	QU.	W or U.	CH.	Z.

What

What are we to think of thoſe inſcriptions in the Runic character, which travellers aſſure us they have ſeen in the deſarts of Tartary *? Tartary has never yet been converted to Chriſtianity; from this and the circumjacent countries iſſued thoſe ſwarms which peopled Scandinavia; nor have the Scandinavians ever made any expedition into their mother country ſince they embraced the Chriſtian faith. If then the account given us by theſe travellers is true, we muſt neceſſarily conclude that the Runic writing was an art which had its riſe in Aſia, and was carried into Europe by the colonies who came to ſettle in the North. This is alſo confirmed by all the old chronicles and poems which I have ſo often quoted. They univerſally agree in aſſigning to the Runic characters a very remote antiquity, and an origin entirely pagan. They attribute the invention of them to Odin himſelf; who, they add, was eminently ſkilled in the art of writing as well for the common purpoſes of life, as for the operations of magic †. Many of theſe

* Conſult Strahlemberg's Deſcription of the northern and eaſtern parts of Europe and Aſia, [quoted by Er. Benzel. Jun. in Pericul. Runic. Diſſ. Upſal. 1724. See alſo in the ſame book the map of Tartary. *Firſt Edit.*]

† Edda Iſland. et Barthol. p. 649.

letters even bore the names of the Gods his companions. In a very ancient ode, quoted by Bartholin, the poet thus ſpeaks of the Runic characters ‡: " The letters which " the Great Ancient traced out: which " the Gods compoſed: which Odin the " ſovereign of the Gods engraved." Had it been otherwiſe, how could the pagans have ſo ſoon forgotten that theſe letters were introduced among them by the miniſters of a religion that was foreign, unknown, and muſt have been hateful to them, ſince they were often compelled by violent means to profeſs it? How could all their poets (who were at the ſame time their theologians) ſo expreſsly call Odin, " The inventor of the RUNES?" But laſtly, what appears to be of great weight, is, that our hiſtories often make mention of princes and pagan heroes who made uſe of this character in an age when, in all probability, Chriſtianity had not penetrated ſo far into the North †. In Blekingia,

‡ Vid. Barthol. de Cauſis cont. mort. p. 647.

† Venantius Fortunatus, a Latin poet, who wrote about the beginning of the ſixth century, ſpeaks even then of the Runic characters in one of his epigrams addreſſed to Flavius. Lib. vii. Epig. 18.

Blekingia, a province of Sweden, there is a road cut through a rock, on which are various Runic characters, ſaid to have been engraved there by king HAROLD HYLDETAND in honour of his father. Saxo, who lived under Valdemar II.† relates, that this prince ſent people thither to examine them, and that tradition attributed them to that king Harold who, according to Torfæus, aſcended the throne about the beginning of the ſeventh century. The ſame author aſſures us that Regner Lodbrog uſed Runic letters to record his exploits in Biarmland ‡. Inſtances of the ſame kind are found in almoſt every page of the ancient chronicles, and of Torfæus's hiſtory of Norway.

We may then fairly conclude, that it was Odin himſelf that introduced the

Barbara fraxineis pingatur RUNA *tabellis*
Quodque Papyrus agit Virgula plana valet.

i. e. The Barbarians engrave their Runic characters on aſhen tablets, which ſerve them inſtead of paper. Vid. Wormii Literat. Runic. p. 7.

† He reigned from A. D. 1202, to A. D. 1241. See Sax. Gram. in Præfat. and the Notes of Steph. Stephan. on that paſſage.

‡ A province in the north part of Ruſſia. Vid. Sax. Grammat. lib. ix.

Runic characters into the North. Almoſt all the Aſiatic nations had long before his time been acquainted with letters, and this prince's native country could not be far diſtant from many of thoſe people among whom they had been long familiar. Nor is it improbable but that an ambitious leader might avail himſelf of them, to acquire reſpect from the rude uncivilized inhabitants of Scandinavia. The art of writing being of ſuch infinite and wonderful uſe, might eaſily perſuade them that there was ſomething divine or magical in it. Accordingly we ſee them more frequently employ it for the fooliſh purpoſe of working prodigies, than to aſſiſt the memory and render words fixed and permanent.

This would be the place to ſay ſomething of thoſe ſuperſtitious practices, if we had not already given ſufficient inſtances of the weakneſs of the human mind, and of the ſtrange errors and extravagances to which ignorant nations are ſubject. Let it ſuffice then juſt to obſerve, that the Runic characters were diſtinguiſhed into various kinds *. The NOXIOUS, or as they called

* Vid. Worm. Litterat. Runic. p. 33. et Barthol. de Cauſ. &c. p. 650.

them,

them, the BITTER RUNES, were employed to bring various evils on their enemies: the FAVOURABLE averted misfortunes: the VICTORIOUS procured conqueſt to thoſe who uſed them: the MEDICINAL were inſcribed on the leaves of trees for healing: others ſerved to diſpel melancholy thoughts; to prevent ſhipwreck: were antidotes againſt poiſon; preſervatives againſt the reſentment of their enemies, and efficacious to render a miſtreſs favourable: Theſe laſt were to be uſed with great caution. If an ignorant perſon had chanced to write one letter for another, or had but erred in the minuteſt ſtroke, he would have expoſed his miſtreſs to ſome dangerous illneſs; which was only to be cured by writing other RUNES with the greateſt niceneſs. All theſe various kinds differed only in the ceremonies obſerved in writing them, in the materials on which they were written, in the place where they were expoſed, in the manner in which the lines were drawn, whether in the form of a circle, of a ſerpent, or a triangle, &c. In the ſtrict obſervance of theſe childiſh particulars conſiſted that obſcure and ridiculous art, which acquired to ſo many weak and wicked perſons, the reſpectable name of Prieſts and Propheteſſes, merely for filling rude

minds with ſo much jealouſy, fear and hatred *.

However, the uſe of letters for more rational purpoſes became by degrees more common in the North. In the latter ages of paganiſm, we frequently meet with princes and famous leaders, and in general all perſons whoſe rank entitled them to a careful education, writing epiſtles, epitaphs and inſcriptions of various kinds ‡.

* It is by miſchievous errors of the ſame kind that all nations have been diſtinguiſhed in their firſt ages of ſimplicity and ignorance; thoſe firſt ages which prejudice makes us regret, and wiſh that the arts had never corrupted their primeval innocence. Whereas in proportion as the empire of the Sciences hath prevailed in the North, that of Superſtition hath faded and vaniſhed before its growing light. But the extremity of Scandinavia, where that light hath not yet penetrated, ſtill remains faithfully ſubject to all its ancient errors. Allowing for the difference of their climate and poverty, the Laplanders at preſent are in this reſpect what the Scandinavians were formerly. With the ſame ignorance, they are equally ſubject to ſuperſtition and credulity; for it is a certain rule that Magic never fails to work prodigies in all ſuch nations as believe in it. The Oſtiacs and other ſavages of Aſia are no leſs given to ſorcery and witchcraft than the Laplanders, and we have all heard of the JONGLEURS, thoſe magicians ſo revered among the Barbarians of America. *Firſt Edit.*

‡ Vid. Verel. Runograph. Scand. p. 21.

The

The older theſe inſcriptions are the better they are engraven. We rarely find them written from the right hand to the left †: but it is not uncommon to meet with the line running from the top to the bottom after the manner of the Chineſe and ſeveral nations of India; or from the top to the bottom, and then turning round to the left, and ſo up again to the place it begins at; or elſe from the left to the right, and ſo back to the left again, which was the manner of the early Greeks, and had its name from the reſemblance to a furrow traced by the plough *. The greater part of the ancient monuments written in the Runic character, which are ſtill preſerved, are inſcriptions diſperſed here and there in the fields §, and cut out on large ſtones or pieces of rock. The Scandinavians wrote alſo on wood, on the bark of the birch-tree, and on prepared ſkins. When they had occaſion to impart any matter to an abſent perſon, they diſpatched a meſſenger with a bit of bark, or a ſmall poliſhed piece of wood, on which they commonly expreſſed their meaning with much exactneſs.

† Vid. Worm. Litterar. Run. cap. xxv.

* Βουστροφηδον.

§ They are alſo often found in churches, and ſometimes in other buildings. T.

There are ſtill extant ſome of theſe epiſtles, and even love-letters written on theſe pieces of bark and bits of wood ‖. As for books compoſed in the Runic character, the moſt ancient we can find, appear to have been written about the time that Chriſtianity took place in the North, as is judged from ſeveral proofs, particularly from the frequent intermixture of Roman letters in them. In the tenth and eleventh centuries the Runic gave way ſtill more and more to the other. Till at length the miſſionaries ſucceeded in totally aboliſhing the uſe of them, as tending to retain the people in their ancient ſuperſtitions. But this reformation did not ſpeedily take place, and there remained traces of this character for many ſucceeding ages; nor, as we are aſſured *, is it yet wholly laid aſide among the mountaineers of one province in Sweden.

‖ Renhielm, a learned Swede, in his Notes upon the Icelandic chronicle, intitled "Torſtein's Wik Saga," p. 35, cites an ancient billet-doux, containing only theſe words, "I ſhould "love better, young maid, "to repoſe on thy boſom, "than to poſſeſs the "riches of the three In-"dies," Olaus Wormius alſo tells us, that he had one in his cabinet of curioſities which was writ upon little tables of wood, but he hath not thought proper to tranſlate it.

Firſt Edit.

* See Dalin. Su. Rik. hiſt. tom. i. p. 237, and Benzel. collect. hiſt. p. i. cap. 1.

I ſhall

I ſhall avoid entering into the diſputes which have been raiſed on the ſubject of the ancient northern tongues: For however the reſearch may have been heretofore carried on with much gravity, it was in reality very trifling, nor is it a trifle of that kind which ſerves to intereſt or amuſe the world at preſent. Let it ſuffice to remark, that from the reſult of the whole it appears, that all Europe at firſt ſpoke the ſame language *, excepting the SARMATIANS who from the earlieſt time had one peculiar to themſelves, the GREEKS

* M. MALLET here goes upon the erroneous hypotheſis of M. PELLOUTIER in his "Hiſt. "des Celtes;" that the Gauls and Germans were the ſame people and had one common language: but this a ſlight inſpection of the dialects of their reſpective deſcendants is ſufficient to confute, and for this the reader need only caſt his eye over the ſpecimens ſubjoined to the preface. ——For as our author obſerves juſt below, "the ancient "languages of the NORTHERN and WESTERN "parts of Europe are "ſtill preſerved in thoſe "countries which the "Romans never con-"quered; and traces of "them are ſtill viſible in "others:" An ocular inſpection therefore of thoſe languages thus preſerved, compared with their more ancient dialects, will ſerve to decide a diſpute of this ſort better than a thouſand arguments drawn from conjecture and hypotheſis, or from obſcure paſſages of ancient Latin and Greek authors, who knew nothing of any language but their own. T.

who borrowed many of their terms from Ægypt and the Eaſt, and the ROMANS who in part adopted the language of Greece. This ancient language of the northern and weſtern parts of Europe has only been preſerved in thoſe countries, which the Romans never conquered; although evident traces of it are ſtill viſible in others that were long ſubject to their dominion. The Spaniſh and French tongues abound with many words which we find ſtill extant in the Teutonic *, ſome of them ſuch as the Romans could not obliterate, and many others introduced by the frequent migrations from the North. It is true, that the common lot of all the languages in the world hath attended this, to be branched out into almoſt as many different dialects as there

* The ancient language of the NORTHERN parts of Europe was the GOTHIC or TEUTONIC; that of the WESTERN parts, the GAULISH or CELTIC: Theſe two languages had originally no reſemblance: Yet the Spaniſh and French and Italian tongues have ſome words derived from both. Thoſe of CELTIC origin were what prevailed in Spain and France and the northern parts of Italy before the Roman conqueſts: thoſe of TEUTONIC derivation were imported into thoſe countries by the Gothic emigrants after the decline of the Roman empire. This diſtinction carefully attended to, would remove all the obſcurity, confuſion and miſtake, which ſome learned men have thrown on this ſubject. T.

were

were different nations who ſpoke it; but they all of them retain ample proof of their origin from one common parent. "The Teutonic or Gothic tongue of the "fourth and fifth centuries is very like the "language of Wales and Bas-Bretaign, "and have ſome reſemblance to the "Iriſh *." That tongue is ſtill ſpoken in Iceland,

* This ſtrange error, which I chuſe to diſtinguiſh by inverted commas, our ingenious author could never have fallen into, had he been a native of this iſland, where dialects of the TEUTONIC and CELTIC languages are ſtill ſpoken by innumerable multitudes. The TEUTONIC tongue of the fourth and fifth centuries was the parent of our ANGLO-SAXON, whence is derived our preſent ENGLISH. The language of WALES, BAS-BRETAIGNE, and the ERSE (or IRISH) are known deſcendants (at leaſt the two former) of the ancient CELTIC. But we, of this iſland, know that there are hardly any two languages in the world, radically more different than the WELSH and ENGLISH: And ſuch as are acquainted with the ſtate of the ANGLO-SAXON and GOTHIC tongue before the times of Chriſtianity, well know that it was ſtill more remote from the WELSH and ERSE, than our modern ENGLISH; for theſe three languages have at preſent many terms in common, relating to religion, government and the conveniences of life, which they have either borrowed from the Latin or from each other, in conſequence of their vicinage, or their profeſſing the ſame faith, and their living under the ſame or a ſimilar form of government: Whereas originally

Iceland, and in ſome mountainous provinces of Sweden. The Daniſh, the Norwegian and the Swediſh are evidently the ſame, and are very like the German, eſpecially the Low Dutch. It ſeems as if the foreign colonies under the conduct of Odin, who ſettled in Scandinavia and the north of Germany, had only introduced a ſofter pronunciation, a very few new words, and ſome ſmall difference in the terminations.

After what we have ſeen of the character and manners of the Scandinavians, we cannot form any very high idea of their language. As men only invent terms in proportion as they acquire ideas, language muſt of courſe have been at firſt very poor and unadorned, not at all expreſſive of a variety of abſtract notions; but among a free, independant and warlike people, it muſt have borrowed its colourings from the genius of the ſpeakers*. There

ally theſe were different. And yet after all, the WELSH and ERSE continue as remote as poſſible from the ENGLISH (and every other branch of the TEUTONIC whether ancient or modern) in their genius, idioms, inflection, conſtruction, general *copia verborum*, and every other criterion of language. See the Specimens annexed to the preface. T.

* "Nations like ſingle "men, have their pecu- "liar ideas; theſe pecu- "liar

There is always ſomething to be admired in the language of a free people, however groſs and ignorant they may be in other reſpects: Such a language has always an energetic brevity, lively and ſententious turns, and pictureſque expreſſions, which the conſtraint of our education, the fear of ridicule, and the dominion of faſhion render the modern tongues incapable of retaining. But what muſt have contributed ſtill further to give ſtrength and ſublimity to that of the ancient Scandinavians was their general and diſtinguiſhed taſte for poetry. This is a ſubject ſo intereſting as to deſerve to be treated with particular attention.

MANKIND, every where eſſentially the ſame, have been always led to poetical compoſition, prior to that of proſe. This ſeems, at preſent, the reverſe of the natural order; but we think ſo either through our prejudices or for want of putting ourſelves in the place of a people who are ignorant of the art of writing. Pleaſing ſounds and the attractions of harmony would ſtrike at firſt every ear; but ſong could not long

" liar ideas become the " genius of their lan- " guage, ſince the ſym- " bol muſt of courſe cor- " reſpond to its arche- " type. Ἦθος χαρακτὴρ " ἐϛι τ' ἀνθρώπε λόγος." HERMES. p. 407. T.

ſubſiſt without poetry. No ſooner was it obſerved how theſe two united powers fixed and impreſſed thoſe images on the mind, which the memory was deſirous of retaining; than they acquired a new degree of eſteem, eſpecially among ſuch as aſpired to a laſting fame. Verſe was made uſe of to preſerve the memory of remarkable events and great actions. The laws of a people, their religious ceremonies and rural labours were alſo recorded in numbers, becauſe theſe are ſubjects which conſiſting of a great variety of particulars, might eaſily fall into oblivion. Hence it was that Greece could already boaſt of an Homer, an Heſiod, and of many other poets, ſeveral ages before PHERECYDES* had written in proſe. Hence among the Gauls and other Celtic nations there were poems compoſed on all ſubjects from the earlieſt ages, which the Druids, who were appointed to educate the youth, frequently employed twenty years in teaching them to repeat †. This cuſtom, rendered ſacred by its high antiquity, which ever commands reſpect from the people, was in

* He lived 600 years after the taking of Troy; whereas there were poets previous to that famous expedition.

† Cæſar. Comment. lib. vi. 14.

force

force many ages after the art of writing had pointed out a more perfect method of preſerving the memorials of human knowledge. In like manner the Scandinavians for a long time applied their Runic letters only to the ſenſeleſs purpoſes above-mentioned; nor did they during ſo many years ever think of committing to writing thoſe verſes with which their memories were loaded; and it is probable that they only wrote down a ſmall quantity of them at laſt. The idea of making a book never entered into the heads of thoſe fierce warriors, who knew no medium between the violent exerciſes and fatigues of war or hunting; and a ſtupid lethargic ſtate of inaction. Among the innumerable advantages, which accrued to the northern nations from the introduction of the Chriſtian religion, that of teaching them to apply the knowledge of letters to uſeful purpoſes, is not the leaſt valuable. Nor could a motive leſs ſacred have eradicated that habitual and barbarous prejudice, which cauſed them to neglect ſo admirable a ſecret. The churches and monaſteries were at leaſt ſo many aſylums where this ſecret was preſerved, while the ferocity of manners which prevailed in the dark ages, tended again to conſign it to oblivion. The theological diſputes between the different

ſects had this good effect, that they obliged them to conſult many ancient books, and to compoſe new ones. The Celtic religion on the contrary, by relying on poetry and tradition for the preſervation of its tenets, and in a manner forbidding the uſe of writing, leſt they ſhould be divulged, muſt needs extend the empire of barbariſm and ignorance.

So long as that religion prevailed in the North, the uſe of letters being very limited; it is no paradox to ſay that verſe was a neceſſary medium of knowledge, and the poet an eſſential officer of the ſtate. And if it requires a peculiar and uncommon genius to excel in this art, the profeſſors of it would of courſe acquire a very high degree of eſteem and reſpect. All the hiſtorical monuments of the North are full of the honours paid this order of men both by princes and people; nor can the annals of poetry produce any age or country which reflects more glory and luſtre upon it. The ancient chronicles conſtantly repreſent the kings of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden as attended by one or more SCALDS *; for this was the

* The word SCALD is judged by Torfæus to have ſignified originally "a ſmoother and poliſher of language." Vide Torfæi Præfat. ad Orcades, folio. T.

name

name they gave their poets. They were more eſpecially honoured and careſſed at the courts of thoſe princes, who diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their great actions and paſſion for glory. HAROLD HARFAGRE, for inſtance, placed them at his feaſts above all the other officers of his court *. Many princes entruſted them both in peace and war with commiſſions of the utmoſt importance. They never ſet out on any conſiderable expedition without ſome of them in their train. HACON earl of Norway had five celebrated poets along with him in that famous battle of which I have ſpoken, when the warriors of Jomſburg were defeated; and hiſtory records that they ſung each an ode to animate the ſoldiers before they engaged †. But they enjoyed another advantage, which would be more the envy of the poets of theſe

* Vid. Hiſt. Norveg. vol. II. p. 21. Bartholin. Cauſ. Contempt. a Dan. Mortis, p. 166.

† See Torf Bartholin, p. 172. who produces other inſtances to the ſame purpoſe: particularly that of OLAVE king of Norway, who placed three of his SCALDS about him to be eye-witneſſes of his exploits (as deſcribed by our author below): theſe bards compoſed each of them a ſong on the ſpot, which Bartholin has printed and accompanied with a Latin verſion. Other ſongs of the ſame kind may be found in the ſame author. T.

days. They were rewarded for the poems they compoſed in honour of the kings and heroes, with magnificent preſents. We never find the SCALD ſinging his verſes at the courts of princes without being recompenſed with golden rings, glittering arms, and rich apparel. Their reſpect for this order of men often extended ſo far as to remit the puniſhment of crimes they had committed, on condition they ſued out their pardon in verſe; and we have ſtill extant an ode, by which EGILL, a celebrated poet, atoned for a murder he had been guilty of *. In a word, the poetic art was held in ſuch high eſtimation, that great lords and even kings did not diſdain to cultivate it with the utmoſt pains themſelves. ROGVALD earl of the Orkney iſlands paſſed for a very able poet; he boaſts himſelf, in a ſong of his which is ſtill extant, that he knew how to compoſe verſes on all ſubjects †. King REGNER was no leſs diſtinguiſhed for his ſkill in poetry, than in war and navi-

* EGILL had even killed the ſon of that prince, who remitted his puniſhment: This was Eric Blodox king of Norway. The reader may ſee an Engliſh verſion of the poem, EGILL compoſed on this occaſion, together with the original, in a little 8vo pamphlet, intitled "Five Pieces of "Runic Poetry, tranſlated from the Icelandic "language," 1763. T.

† Vid. Worm. Litter. Runic. p. 195.

gation.

gation. Many of his poems were long preſerved in the North, and may be found inſerted in the hiſtory of his life: and it is well known that he died no leſs like a poet than an hero.

The reſpect however which the northern nations paid to their SCALDS was not owing to the nobility of their extraction. A people whoſe object was glory, could not fail of ſhowing a great deference to thoſe who both publiſhed it abroad and conſigned it to futurity, let their original be what it would. A prince or illuſtrious warrior oftentimes expoſed his life with ſo much intrepidity only to be praiſed by his Scald, who was both the witneſs and judge of his bravery. It is affirmed that this kind of men, altho' poets, were never guilty of flattery, and never laviſhed their praiſes on heroes and kings themſelves unleſs their gallant exploits were quite inconteſtible *. Hence aroſe the cuſtom of always bringing them into the ſcene of action: OLAVE king of Norway placing 'three of' them one day around him in battle, cried out with ſpirit, "You ſhall not relate what you have only "heard, but what you are eye-witneſſes

* Vid. Bartholin. p. 154. et cap. 10. lib. i. paſſim. T.

" of yourſelves *." The ſame poets uſually ſung their verſes themſelves at ſolemn feſtivals and in great aſſemblies, to the ſound of the flute or harp †. But the ſubject of theſe poems was not confined to one ſingle event, ſuch as a victory or ſome generous action; it was frequently a genealogical hiſtory of all the kings of the country, deduced down from the Gods to the reigning prince, who always derived his origin from them. Theſe poems were, according to Tacitus, the only annals of the Germans ‡: They had great numbers of them, which were not wholly forgotten in the eighth century; ſince Eginhard relates, that CHARLEMAGNE cauſed them to be committed to writing. " And even learnt " himſelf," adds the hiſtorian, " the rude " and ancient ſongs in which the ex- " ploits and the wars of the firſt princes " were celebrated." In poems of the ſame kind conſiſted for many ages all the hiſtory of the Scandinavians. A bard named THIODOLFE, celebrated in his

* Vid. Olaf. Saga ap. Verel. ad Herv. Sag. p. 178. Bartholin. Cauſ. Contemp. a Dan. &c. p. 172.

† Stephan in not. ad Saxon. p. 12.

‡ *Celebrant carminibus antiquis (quod unum apud illos memoriæ et annalium genus eſt) tuiſtonem, &c.* Tac. Germ. c. 10.

T.

verſes

verſes the exploits of Harold and thirty of his predeceſſors; another called EYVIND, compoſed an hiſtorical poem which went back as far as Odin. Such are the ſources whence Saxo drew his materials for the firſt ſix or ſeven books of his hiſtory, and he might doubtleſs have derived great aſſiſtance from them, if he had not happened to live in an age wholly deſtitute of that exact ſkill in criticiſm, which knows how to ſeparate facts from the fictions with which they are blended.

The neceſſity there was for poets, the natural attractions of the art itſelf, and thoſe it derived from the manners of the age, greatly multiplied the number of SCALDS. An ancient Icelandic manuſcript has preſerved a liſt of all ſuch as diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the three northern kingdoms, from the reign of Regner Lodbrog to that of Valdemar II.* They are in number two hundred and thirty, among whom we find more than one crowned head. But what is not leſs remarkable is, that the greateſt part of them are natives of Iceland. The reader has doubtleſs by this time obſerved that we are indebted to that iſland for almoſt all the hiſtorical monuments of the

* Viz. from A. D. 750, to 1157.—Vide SCALDATAL in Append. ad Lit. Run. Ol. Worm. p. 242.

northern nations now remaining. It cannot eaſily be accounted for how it came to paſs, that a people disjoined from the reſt of the world, few in number, depreſſed by poverty, and ſituated in ſo unfavourable a climate, ſhould be capable in thoſe dark ages, of manifeſting ſuch a taſte for literature, and ſhould even riſe to the perception of the more refined mental pleaſures. While they were heathens, the Icelandic annaliſts were always deemed the beſt in the North. After they had embraced the Chriſtian faith, they were the firſt who thought of unravelling the chaos of ancient hiſtory, who collected the old poems, digeſted the chronicles into a regular form, and applied themſelves to reſcue from oblivion the traditions of their pagan theology. Were we better informed of certain particulars relating to the ſtate of the North during thoſe remote ages, we might poſſibly find the cauſe of this phænomenon either in the poverty of the inhabitants of Iceland, which drove them to ſeek their fortunes at the neighbouring courts; Or in the ſucceſs of their firſt bards, which excited their emulation, and at the ſame time prepoſſeſſed ſtrangers in their favour; Or laſtly, in the nature of their republican government, in which the talent of oratory and the reputation of ſuperior

ſenſe

ſenſe and capacity are the direct roads to reſpect and preferment.

The ſtile of theſe ancient poems is very enigmatical and figurative, very remote from the common language, and for that reaſon, grand, but tumid; ſublime, but obſcure. If it be the character of poetry to have nothing in common with proſe, if the language of the Gods ought to be quite different from that of men, if every thing ſhould be expreſſed by imagery, figures, hyperboles, and allegories, the Scandinavians may rank in the higheſt claſs of poets: Nor is this unaccountable. The ſoaring flights of fancy may poſſibly more peculiarly belong to a rude and uncultivated, than to a civilized people. The great objects of nature ſtrike more forcibly on rude imaginations. Their paſſions are not impaired by the conſtraint of laws and education. The paucity of their ideas and the barrenneſs of their language oblige them to borrow from all nature, images fit to cloath their conceptions in. How ſhould abſtract terms and reflex ideas, which ſo much enervate our poetry, be found in theirs? They could ſeldom have been met with in their moſt familiar converſations. The moment the ſoul, reflecting on its own operations recurs inwards, and detaches itſelf from exterior objects, the imagination

loſes its energy, the paſſions their activity, the mind becomes ſevere, and requires ideas rather than ſenſations; language then becomes preciſe and cautious, and poetry being no longer the child of pure paſſion, is able to affect but feebly. If it be aſked, what is become of that magic power which the ancients attributed to this art? It may be well ſaid to exiſt no more. The poetry of the modern languages is nothing more than reaſoning in rhime, addreſſed to the underſtanding, but very little to the heart. No longer eſſentially connected with religion, politics or morality, it is at preſent, if I may ſo ſay, a mere private art, an amuſement that attains its end when it hath gained the cold approbation of a few ſelect judges.

The moſt affecting and moſt ſtriking paſſages in the ancient northern poetry, were ſuch as now ſeem to us the moſt whimſical, unintelligible and overſtrained: So different are our modes of thinking from theirs. We can admit of nothing but what is accurate and perſpicuous. They only required bold and aſtoniſhing images which appear to us hyperbolical and gigantic. What alſo contributes to render their poetry very obſcure at preſent, is that the language of it is borrowed from their mythology; a mythology not ſo familiar to

as as that of the Greeks and Romans. When they did not allude to their own fables, they took their metaphors from other ſubjects, which were commonly very far-fetched and remote: Thus a poet ſeldom expreſſed heaven by any other term than "the ſcull of the giant Ymer," alluding to a fable on that ſubject. The rain-bow was called "the bridge of the "Gods:" Gold was "the tears of Freya:" Poetry, "the preſent, or the drink of "Odin." The earth was either indifferently "the ſpouſe of Odin, The fleſh of "Ymer, The daughter of the night, The "veſſel which floats on the ages, Or the "foundation of the air:" Herbs and plants were called, "the hair or the fleece of "the earth." A combat was termed "a "bath of blood, The hail of Odin, The "ſhock of bucklers:" The ſea was "the "field of pirates, and the girdle of the "earth:" Ice, "the greateſt of all "bridges:" A ſhip, "the horſe of the "waves;" The tongue, "The ſword of "words," &c. Each of their deities might be expreſſed by an infinite variety of phraſes. In ſhort, a peculiar ſtudy of this kind of language was neceſſary to conſtitute a poet; for which reaſon they early compoſed a dictionary of it for the uſe as well of the Scalds, as their readers.

The ſame Rogvald earl of the Orkneys, before ſpoken of, is ſaid to have compoſed a work of this ſort, which, according to Wormius, is ſtill extant, under the name of THE POETICAL KEY *. Another is found at the end of the Icelandic EDDA, and is intitled SCALDA, or The art of Poetry. This is a collection of epithets and ſynonimous words ſelected from their beſt poets, very like thoſe which are put into the hands of young people when they firſt apply themſelves to Latin poetry.

Yet they ſometimes compoſed verſes in a more ſimple ſtile, and nearer approaching to common language; but this only happened when in converſation a Scald, either to ſhew his happy talent, or to do more honour to the perſon with whom he converſed, anſwered in extemporary metre. This ſingular mode of expreſſing themſelves was very common among the ancient Scandinavians, and proves in what degree of eſteem this

* Vid. Worm. Litter. Runic. p. 195. ——*Rogvaldus Orcadum comes, princeps egregius, inter alias nobiles dotes, quibus ornatus eſt, præſtantiſſimus et promptiſſimus fuit Rhythmiſta, et* CLAVEM RHYTHMITICAM, *quæ adhuc extat, confeciſſe dicitur.*—— *Habuit etiam ille in Palæſtinam navigans itineris comites Rhythmiſtas duos Iſlandos, qui una cum ipſe res quotidie geſtas rhythmis comprehenderunt, et magna apud illum in æſtimatione fuerunt.* T.

people

people held the art of poetry. The chronicles have preſerved a great number of ſuch converſations in verſe; and there is reaſon to believe that theſe poems, which might be ſung at firſt and eaſily committed to memory, were oftentimes the text of which ſucceeding chronicles were nothing more than commentaries or expoſitions. There is no appearance that the verſes were compoſed by the authors of thoſe hiſtories: They are never aſſigned to any but the SCALDS by profeſſion; and are quoted by the hiſtorians as their proofs and vouchers: And beſides it is known to have been uſual with the Scalds to interlard their diſcourſe with extemporary verſes. There are to this day both in the North, in Italy and in other countries, many famous compoſers of *impromptu's*. Thus it is reported of an Icelandic bard, named SIVARD *, that when he ſpoke in proſe his tongue ſeemed embarraſſed and to deliver his thoughts with difficulty, but that he expreſſed himſelf in verſe with the greateſt fluency and eaſe. The hiſtorians frequently and poſitively aſſure us that theſe verſes were ſpoken off-hand. This is what is remarked in the life of the poet EGILL, for inſtance, who purchaſed his pardon

* Vid. Olav. in Epiſt. apud Worm. Litter. Runic.

from the king of Norway by ſinging an extemporary ode which ſtill remains, and is intitled THE RANSOM OF EGILL *. The ſame elogium is often given to another more ancient Scald, called EYVIND, and ſurnamed from his ſuperior talents, "The croſs of the poets." All the chronicles mention his great facility in compoſing verſes, as a matter well known throughout the North.

We muſt not however infer, that theſe poets were wholly unconfined by rules, or that even they were not under very ſevere ones: it is true, if we may credit Wormius, they were ignorant of the ſhackles of rhime, which have ſo long galled modern poets †. But poſſibly this learned man

* Vid. Torf. H. N. tom. ii. p. 188. et ſeq.

† By way of Appendix to his LITERATURA RUNICA, Wormius has given ſome of the laws of the ancient Runic Poetry communicated to him by a friend: One of theſe is; "*Rhythmorum veterum infinita fere ſunt genera, vulgo tamen uſitatiorum centum triginta ſex eſſe putantur:*" the author adds by way of corollary . . . *Nec inter hæc recenſebatur illud genus quo jam ludunt noſtrates, totum artificium in ὁμοιοτέλευτοις ponentes.* Meaning only that there were 136 ſorts of metre, without including rhyme; for he afterwards gives a long poem all in rhyme. But the publiſher having inadvertently added in the margin (by way of giving the contents of the paragraph) *Modernum Rhythmi genus veteribus incognitum*; ſuperficial Readers

man ſhould rather have ſaid, that the old northern poets did not always make uſe of rhime; for he even quotes, in the ſame treatiſe, ancient poems which are not only in rhime, but even rhimed with the utmoſt exactneſs *. BARTHOLIN has alſo

ders have been led into the miſtake, that Rhyme was wholly unknown to the northern SCALDS, and by parity of reaſon to all the Gothic poets; whereas it was undoubtedly from theſe that this modern ornament of verſe derived its origin and uſe. T.

* This is the famous Ode of EGILL, mentioned above; which is not only in ſingle, but double rhymes. Take a ſtanza by way of ſpecimen:

Raud hilmer hior
That var hrafn-agior
Fleinn hitte fier
Flugn dreyrug ſpior
Ol Flagds gota
Tharbiodur ſkota
Thrad niſt NARA
Nattuerd ara.

i. e. "The king dyed "his ſword in crimſon; "his ſword that glutted "the hungry ravens. "The weapon aimed at "human life. The "bloody lances flew. "The commander of the "Scottiſh fleet fed fat "the birds of prey. The "ſiſter of NARA [Death] "trampled on the foe: "ſhe trampled on the "evening food of the "eagle." See FIVE PIECES OF RUNIC POETRY, p. 52. 93. OLAII WORM. LITERATUR. RUNIC. p. 232. T.

given us two little ſongs in rhime, which ſeem to be older than the tenth century †. It is probable that many more of the ſame age, are either totally loſt or concealed in manuſcripts which I am unacquainted with. Since that time the poets have more and more run into the uſe of rhime. We find in the collection of ancient monuments, publiſhed by Mr. Biorner, a pretty long poem, which, according to that author, was writ in the twelfth or thirteenth century; this poem is not only moſt exactly and uniformly in rhime, but the meaſure ſeems to be much like what we [the French] call heroic or Alexandrine verſe. Some people have advanced that rhime is of a very ancient date among the Celtic nations; but it is difficult to give very ſolid proofs of this: it is however likely enough, if we reflect that the Scandinavians* were long acquainted with it, and that there is no kind of harmony or cadence more ſimple or more likely to catch the ear.

† Vid. Olaf. Trygguaſon. Saga apud Bartholin. Cauſ. contempt. a Dan. mortis, p. 81, et p. 489.

* This is true, ſuppoſing the Scandinavians were a branch of the Celtes: One may however infer from its being uſed among thoſe northern tribes, that it early prevailed among the other Gothic nations. T.

It

It is not eaſy to diſcover wherein conſiſted the mechaniſm and harmony of thoſe ancient verſes which were not in rhime. The learned who have made the northern languages their ſtudy, fancy they diſcover in ſome of them the Saphic meaſure, which many Greek lyric poets and Horace in Latin ſo frequently choſe *. In others the poet

* Dalin. Suea. Rik. Hiſt. lib. viii. —— [This reſemblance to the Saphic meaſure, will I am afraid be found only imaginary. It may with more certainty be affirmed that the vaſt variety of metre uſed by the ancient SCALDS may chiefly, if not altogether be reduced to different kinds of Alliteration. In Wormius we have an exact analyſis of one of theſe ſorts of metre: in which it was requiſite that the ſtanza or ſtrophe ſhould conſiſt of four diſtichs, and each verſe of ſix ſyllables. In each diſtich three words at leaſt were required to begin with the ſame letters, (that is, two words in one verſe, and one in the other), that there ſhould beſides this be two correſpondent ſyllables in each verſe, and that none of the correſpondences ought immediately to follow each other; &c. as in the following Latin couplet:

ChriSTus Caput noSTrum
CorONet te bONis.

This appears to us at preſent, to be only a very laborious way of trifling; however we ought not to decide too haſtily: every language has its own peculiar laws of harmony; and as the ancient Greeks

poet ſeems to have tied himſelf up to begin the two firſt lines of each ſtrophe with the ſame letters, and to confine his verſe within ſix ſyllables. Others think they obſerve that the initial letters of the lines correſpond

and Romans formed their metre of certain artful diſtributions of their long and ſhort ſyllables: ſo the northern Scalds placed the ſtructure of theirs in the ſtudied repetition and adaptation of the vowels and conſonants.——The ſame mode of verſification was admired by our Anglo-Saxon anceſtors, and hath not wholly been laid aſide much more than two centuries among our Engliſh poets; ſee "Reliques of ancient Engl. poetry," Vol. II. p. 260.—— It may not be amiſs to add, that the metre of the WELSH bards is altogether of the alliterative kind, and full as artificial as that of the ancient Scandinavians: Yet thoſe who thoroughly underſtand that language, aſſert that this kind of metre is extremely pleaſing to the ear, and does not ſubject the poet to more reſtraint than the different ſorts of feet did the Greek and Roman poets.

Perhaps it will not be difficult to find the difference between the metre of the ancient Claſſics, and that of the Gothic and Celtic bards, in the different genius of their reſpective languages. The Greek and Latin tongues chiefly conſiſted of polyſyllables, of words ending with vowels, and not overburdened with conſonants: their poets therefore (if they would produce harmony) could not but make their metre to conſiſt in quantity, or the artful diſpoſal of the long and ſhort ſyllables; whereas the old Celtic and Teutonic languages being chiefly compoſed of monoſyllables, could have had hardly any ſuch thing as quantity, and on the other hand abounding in harſh

correſpond in many different reſpects, either in the ſame or in different ſtrophees. The moſt ſkilful inveſtigators of this ſubject aſſure us, that the poets perpetually invented new meaſures, and reckon up one hundred and thirty-ſix kinds *. The explication of them we muſt leave to the aſſiduity of thoſe who have reckoned them up.

This taſte for the abſtruſe and complicated, could not fail of running them into allegories and enigmas of every kind: We often meet with princes and great warriors in the ancient chronicles, propoſing riddles and affixing penalties on ſuch as could not unravel them. In the firſt interview king Regner had with the beautiful ſhepherdeſs before mentioned, he tried by enigmas to diſcover whether her wit was anſwerable to her beauty. Another king, named ERIC, rendered himſelf famous for being able to give immediate anſwers to thirty riddles, which Odin himſelf had

harſh conſonants, the firſt effort of their bards to reduce it to harmony muſt have been by placing theſe conſonants at ſuch diſtances from each other, ſo intermixing them with vowels, and ſo artfully interweaving, repeating and dividing theſe ſeveral ſounds, as to produce an agreeable effect from their ſtructure. T.

* Worm. App. Litt. Run. p. 165. rec. edit.

come to propoſe to him, having aſſumed the appearance of one GEST, a man extremely well verſed in this art. Theſe are ſtill extant in an old Icelandic romance *. But excepting ſome few, which are tolerably ingenious, they are either totally unintelligible, or built on verbal equivocations. The poets were not limited to this kind only. There is mention made from the earlieſt ages of LOGOGRYPHS †, and other ſtill more trifling ſpecies of wit, for which we happily want even names. Some of them muſt have coſt much labour, and all imply ſuch an acuteneſs and patience in the inventors, as would hardly be expected from a nation of warriors.

In regard to the old poems, all that is moſt needful to be known about them, is the peculiar genius, manner and taſte that runs through them. Some of them preſent us with the faithful and genuine mode of thinking of thoſe times, but they are often difficult to underſtand, and ſtill more to tranſlate. Nevertheleſs, to ſatisfy the

* Vid. Hervarer Saga. c. xv.

† A LOGOGRYPH is a kind of enigma, which conſiſts of taking, in different ſenſes, the different parts of the ſame word.——See inſtances of this ſpecies of falſe wit in Ol. Wormii Literat. Runic. p. 183, 185, &c. T.

curioſity

curioſity of thoſe readers who like to view the original manners and ſpirit of a people, I have endeavoured to tranſlate ſuch fragments of ancient northern poetry as would beſt anſwer this purpoſe. Theſe tranſlations, together with a few explanatory notes, will be thrown to the end by way of ſequel, and as affording vouchers to this little work.

THERE remains now but one word to add by way of CONCLUSION. When the truth of facts is once ſolidly eſtabliſhed, we may ſafely reaſon concerning their cauſes. From a repreſentation of ſuch facts, (which are here only brought together and left to ſpeak for themſelves) a picture has been given of the ancient northern nations. But having thus informed ourſelves concerning the manners of this people; why may not we proceed a ſtep farther, to conſider the general cauſes of their character. It does not ſeem impoſſible here to diſcover and perſue the path which nature hath taken. A great abundance of blood and humours, ſtrong and rigid fibres, together with an inexhauſtible vigour, formed the conſtitutional temperament of the Scandinavians and Germans, as they do

indeed of all ſavage people who live under a like climate *.

Hence proceeded that impetuoſity and violence of their paſſions when they were once rouſed; and hence in their calmer moments that ſerious, phlegmatic and indolent turn. The exerciſes of war and the chace, which are great fatigues to a leſs robuſt people, were to them only amuſements, the means of ſhaking off their lethargy, and of giving an agreeable and even neceſſary motion to the body. Their reliſh for this kind of life, the effect of

* *Sub Septentrionibus nutriuntur gentes immanibus corporibus, candidis coloribus, ſanguine multo, quoniam ab humoris plenitate, cœlique refrigerationibus ſunt confirmati. Sanguinis abundantiâ ferro reſiſtunt ſine timore. . . . Qui refrigeratis naſcuntur regionibus ad armorum vehementiam paratiores ſunt, magniſque viribus ruunt ſine timore, ſed tarditate animi refringuntur.* Vitruv. lib. vi. The ancients bear witneſs to theſe aſſertions; The ſentiments of Vitruvius are here nothing more than their general opinion. [Let the reader caſt his eye over the following paſſages. *Septentrionales populi largo ſanguine redundantes.* Veget. 1, 2. *Gothi conſcientia virium freti, robore corporis validi, manu prompti.* Iſidor. Chronic. p. 730. *Germanicæ nationes, ſæviſſimis duratæ frigoribus, mores ex ipſo cœli rigore traxerunt.* Iſid. Orig. lib. ix. cap. 2. *Scythæ gens laboribus et bellis aſpera: vires corporum immenſæ.* Juſtin. lib. ii. cap. 3. *Firſt Edit.*]

conſti-

conſtitution, ſtrengthened in its turn the cauſe that produced it. Thus ſtrongly moulded by the hand of nature, and rendered hardy by education, the opinion they entertained of their own courage and ſtrength muſt have given the peculiar turn to their character. A man who thinks he has nothing to fear, cannot endure any ſort of conſtraint; much leſs will he ſubmit to any arbitrary authority, which he ſees only ſupported by human power, or ſuch as he can brave with impunity. As he thinks himſelf not obliged to court any one's favour or deprecate his reſentment, he ſcorns diſſimulation, artifice or falſhood. He regards theſe faults, the effects of fear, as the moſt degrading of all others. He is always ready to repel force by force; hence he is neither ſuſpicious nor diſtruſtful. A declared enemy to his enemy, he attacks openly; he confides in and is true to others; generous and ſometimes in the higheſt degree magnanimous, becauſe he places his deareſt intereſt in the idea he entertains and would excite of his courage. He does not willingly confine himſelf to ſuch occupations as require more aſſiduity than action, more application of mind than body; becauſe moderate exerciſe is not ſufficient to put his blood and fibres into ſuch a degree of motion as is neceſſary to his own eaſe.

Hence that diſtaſte for the arts; and as the paſſions always endeavour to juſtify themſelves, hence alſo that contempt and prejudice which repreſents the profeſſion of the arts as diſhonourable. War then becomes the only employment he can exerciſe with pleaſure. The frequent and extreme viciſſitudes, the fatigues and dangers attendant on this way of life, are alone able to throw him into thoſe violent and continual agitations his habit of body requires. Now if we ſuppoſe after this a whole ſociety compoſed of ſuch men, to what a degree of emulation muſt their courage ariſe? The love of diſtinction ſo natural to all men, having here no other object than perſonal valour, with what ardour muſt that quality have been cultivated and cheriſhed? The love of arms becoming thus their ruling and univerſal paſſion, would ſoon characteriſe their religion, dictate their laws, and in ſhort form their prejudices and opinions, which decide every thing among mankind.

But it may be objected, that if the manners and character of the ancient northern people proceeded ſo much from the climate, as the ſame cauſe ſtill operates, why is the effect altered? This is only a ſpecious difficulty. A nation is never ſolely influenced by climate, except in its infancy;

while it is uncultivated and barbarous, it is only guided by inſtinct; the objects of ſenſe and the modes of living being as yet ſimple and uniform. When after ſome ages, reaſon has been expanded by experience and reflection, when legiſlators have ariſen, who either by the native force of genius, or by obſerving the manners of other nations, have ſo enlarged their underſtandings as to perceive the neceſſity of a change of manners, it is then that a new ſyſtem of principles combat, and either divide the empire with, or totally triumph over the firſt phyſical cauſes. Such was the immediate effect of Chriſtianity in the North, an event which, conſidered only in a philoſophical light, ſhould be ever regarded as the dawn of thoſe happy days, which were afterwards to ſhine out with ſuperior ſplendour. In effect, this religion, which tended to correct the abuſe of licentious liberty, to baniſh bloody diſſentions from among individuals, to reſtrain robberies and piracy, ſoftening the ferocity of manners, requiring a certain knowledge of letters and hiſtory, re-eſtabliſhing a part of mankind, who groaned under a miſerable ſlavery, in their natural rights, introducing a reliſh for a life of peace, and an idea of happineſs independant of ſenſual gratifications, ſowed the ſeeds, if I may ſo ſpeak, of that new

ſpirit, which grew to maturity in the ſucceeding ages, and to which the arts and ſciences ſpringing up along with it, added ſtill more ſtrength and vigour.

But after all, is it very certain, as the objection ſuppoſes, that the climate of Europe hath not undergone a change ſince the times we ſpeak of? Thoſe who have read the ancients with attention, think differently, and conclude, that the degrees of cold are at this time much leſs ſevere than they were formerly. This is not a place to enlarge on a ſubject which might appear foreign to the work *. Let it ſuffice to obſerve, that the rivers in Gaul, namely, the LOIRE and the RHONE were regularly frozen over every year, ſo that frequently whole armies with their carriages and baggage could march over them †. Even the TYBER froze at Rome, and Juvenal ſays poſitively, that it was requiſite to break the ice in winter, in order to come at the water of that river §.

Many

* L'Hiſtoire des Celtes, tom. i. c. 12. may be conſulted in this matter.

† Vid. Diod. Sic. lib. v. Dion alſo mentions the coldneſs of Gaul, lib. lxxix. and Statius in Sylv. lib. x. carm. 1.

§ *Hybernum fractâ glacie deſcendet in amnem,*
Ter matutino Tyberi mergetur. Juv. Sat. 6.

The abbé du Bos, from whom this quotation is borrowed, adds, that the TYBER at Rome now freezes no more than the NILE at Grand Cairo, and

Many paſſages in Horace ſuppoſe the ſtreets of Rome to be full of ice and ſnow *. Ovid aſſures us, that the Black Sea was frozen annually, and appeals for the truth of this to the governour of the province, whoſe name he mentions: he alſo relates ſeveral circumſtances concerning that climate, which at preſent agree only with Norway or Sweden ‡. The foreſts of Thrace and Pannonia were full of 'white' bears and white boars, in like manner as now the foreſts of the North †. The northern part

and that the Romans reckon it a very rigorous winter if the ſnow lies two days on the ground unmelted, and if there is any ice on the fountains which are expoſed to the North.

* See in particular lib. ii. ſat. 3 et 6.

‡ Vid. Triſt. lib. iii. eleg. 9. De Ponto. lib. iv. eleg. 7. 9. 10. Tournefort, a native of Provence, ſays in his Voyages, that there is no part of the world where the climate is more mild, nor the fruits more abundant than in THRACE; and that the BLACK SEA is now never frozen. Yet Pliny, Herodian, Strabo, and other authors expreſsly ſay, that THRACE is in a moſt frightful climate, that the inhabitants are forced to bury in the earth and to cover over with dung, during the winter, all the fruit-trees they wiſh to preſerve. Ovid and Strabo agree in ſaying, that the countries about the Boriſthenes and the Cimmerian Boſphorus are both uninhabited and uninhabitable by reaſon of the cold. Vid. Plin. lib. xv. c. 18. Herodian. lib. i. p. 26. Strabo 11. Ovid. Triſt. lib. iii.

† Vid. Pauſan. Arcad. c. xii.

part of Spain was little inhabited for the ſame cauſe *. In ſhort, all the ancients who mention the climate of Gaul, Germany, Pannonia and Thrace, ſpeak of it as inſupportable †, and agree that the ground was covered with ſnow the greateſt part of the year, being incapable of producing olives, grapes, and moſt other fruits. It is eaſy to conceive that the foreſts being cleared away, the face of the country better cultivated, and the marſhy places drained, the moiſt exhalations which generate cold, muſt be conſiderably leſſened, and that the rays of the ſun muſt have a freer acceſs to warm the earth. The ſame thing has happened in North America ſince the Europeans have carried

c. xii. The Gauliſh and German horſes were very ſmall and ill-made, as are theſe of the coldeſt parts of Scandinavia, which M. Buffon attributes to the ſevere cold of thoſe countries. V. Hiſt. Nat. tom. iv. du Cheval. *Equi non formâ conſpicui.* Tac. Germ. *Jumenta Germanis parva et deformia.* Cæſar. de bell. Gallic. lib. xiv.

* Vid. Strab. lib. iii. ——— [Polybius ſpeaks of Arcadia itſelf as ſituate under a cold and humid climate. Lib. iv. c. 21. *Firſt Edit.*]

† *Quid iſtis locis aſperius?* Cicer. *Sithonia nix. Germania informis terris. Aſpera cœlo. Germania frugiferarum arborum impatiens.* Tacitus paſſim. *Gallicâ hyeme frigidior.* Petronius. *Scythico quid frigore pejus.* Ovid. &c. *Firſt Edit.*

there

there their wonted induſtry *. The hiſtory of the North leaves us no room to doubt, that there have been vaſt foreſts cut down, and by this ſingle means extenſive marſhes have been dried up and converted into land fit for cultivation. Without mentioning the general cauſes which inſenſibly effect the deſtruction of foreſts, it was common to ſet theſe on fire in order to procure fertile fields. This was ſo uſual a practice in SWEDEN, that this country is ſuppoſed to have taken its name from thence †. A king of that country was

* "Our colonies in "North-America" (ſays a learned Engliſhman) "become more temperate in proportion "as we cut down the "foreſts; but they are "in general colder than "the countries of Europe ſituated under the "ſame latitude." Vid. Hume's Political Diſcourſ. Diſc. 10. p. 246. Father Charlevoix obſerves the ſame of Canada. "Experience," ſays he, "puts it paſt "contradiction, that the "cold decreaſes in pro"portion as the country "is diſcovered," &c. Journal Hiſtorique d'un Voyage en Amerique. Lettre X. p. 188.

† From the old Cimbric word SUIDIA to burn: Hence lands cleared away and prepared for cultivation are called in the North *Suidior* and *Suidioland*. The ſame derivation holds in the German dialect; *Sueden* from *Sueda*, to burn. Vid. Olai Vereli Notæ in Hiſt. Gotr. et Rolv. p. 9. 1664. 12mo.

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ſurnamed the WOOD-CUTTER, for having grubbed up and cleared vaſt provinces, and felled the trees with which it was all covered. Nor were they leſs cleared away in Norway and Denmark. Thus a change in the climate muſt long have preceded that in the manners.

What concluſion ought we to draw from all this? If for theſe fifteen or ſixteen centuries, the arts, ſciences, induſtry and politeneſs have been inceſſantly advancing in the north of Europe, we cannot but evidently diſcover three cauſes of this, which, though different in their natures, have yet been productive of the ſame effect. The firſt is that reſtleſsneſs natural to the people of all nations, but which acts more forceably on the inhabitants of Europe, and is ever urging them to exchange their preſent condition, in hopes of a better: the ſecond, ſlower but equally ſure, is the change of climate: the third, more ſenſible, more expeditious, but more accidental, is that communication formed between mankind by commerce and religion, and cemented by a thouſand new relations; which has in a ſhort time tranſported from the South into the North new arts, manners and opinions. Theſe three cauſes have continually operated, and the face

face of Scandinavia changes daily. It already ſhines with ſomewhat more than borrowed lights. Time produces ſtrange revolutions. Who knows whether the Sun will not one day riſe in the NORTH?

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.